

**Visualisation and description in the elegies of  
Propertius and Tibullus**

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## Introduction

Propertius and Tibullus wrote with a descriptive flair that demands critical attention. In this thesis, I explore the sensory appeal of their descriptions, with a particular focus on their encouragement of the reader to visualise what is being described. What makes Propertius' and Tibullus' poetry so conducive to visualisation is their *enargeia*, or visual vividness, a quality which, as we shall see, was prized in the Hellenistic criticism of poetry, historiography and oratory, and was developed to its fullest in the practice of Propertius' and Tibullus' Hellenistic predecessors. I examine Propertius' and Tibullus' vivid description, as an aim in itself and as part of a wider aesthetic, encompassing developments in the understanding and reception of visual art in ancient Rome.

Propertius and Tibullus were active during the early Augustan era and were among those poets whose works form part of Latin literature's golden age. Personal erotic elegy was first produced by the scantily preserved Gallus, perhaps modelled partly on Catullus' elegiac poetry, before Propertius and Tibullus published their first books sometime around 27 BC, although the relative dating of the two is a matter for debate. Their audience was the wealthy and well-educated Roman elite.

The relationship between erotic elegy and the artistic developments of classical and Hellenistic Greece and Augustan Rome merits close attention. Graham Zanker has written at length on the relationship between art and poetry in the Hellenistic period, and notes that discoveries in one field could shed light on the other. Propertius and Tibullus, each in his own way, interact with visual art, be it Roman landscape painting, or contemporary or Hellenistic sculpture. This reinforces their visual qualities as poets, and also sheds light on their broader aesthetic aims; this is particularly so with Propertius. Moreover, I argue that it is possible to identify in their descriptions the stylistic quality of *enargeia*, which I will discuss at length below. The application of vivid description to achieve *enargeia* is a major feature of Propertius' and Tibullus' poetry.

Here are two examples of the sort of descriptions we shall examine. Propertius 3.3 contains a description of a sacred grotto, wherein Muses and doves go about their activities. The description is rendered vividly and in such way that the reader can visualise the setting:

hic erat affixis uiridis spelunca lapillis,  
 pendebantque cauis tympana pumicibus,  
 orgia Musarum et Sileni patris imago  
 fictilis et calami, Pan Tegeaeae, tui;  
 et Veneris dominae uolucres, mea turba, columbae  
 tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu... (Prop. 3.3.27-32)

Here was a green cavern decorated with pebbles, and tambourines were hanging from its rocky vault, the holy objects of the Muses and a clay mask of father Silenus, and your pipes, Arcadian Pan; and the winged doves of Venus, their mistress, my people, are dipping their red beaks in the Gorgon's pond...

Colour, furnishings and activity enliven this scene, and the space within the cave becomes increasingly picturable as Propertius adds each detail. Things hang from the cave's roof, doves drink from the pool, and mosaics adorn the walls lining the entrance. The effect of these descriptions recalls *trompe l'oeil* works like the mosaic of the doves, attributed to Sosus in the second century BC, which depicts doves dipping their beaks in a bowl of water.<sup>1</sup>

Another example, this time drawn from Tibullus, is full of intimate detail, and shows us how careful use of visual references can help the reader to 'see' what the poet 'sees'. Tibullus describes Venus' erotic domination of a youth:

at Venus inuenit puero concumbere furtim,  
 dum timet et teneros conserit usque sinus,  
 et dare anhelanti pugnantibus umida linguis  
 oscula et in collo figere dente notas. (Tib. 1.8.35-38)

And Venus came upon the way to lie furtively with a boy, while he's scared and clings tightly in the tender embrace, and to give him, breathless, wet kisses in the duel of tongues, and with her teeth to imprint marks on his neck.

It is not until *in collo figere dente notas* that we encounter something that appeals so directly to sight. Visual description is couched within a larger passage of description and has the effect of sharpening the image by giving the reader something – in this case, the love-bites – that is easily picturable. But it is this physical manifestation of

<sup>1</sup> Havelock 1981: pl. XIV; Museo Capitolini, Rome, Inv. MC0402.

carnal passion that helps to bring out the other sensory details, including *umida oscula* and *teneros sinus*. It also emphasizes the active role of Venus and the passive submission of the boy. The duel of tongues takes on new meaning, for our boy must now bear the scars from his battle with love.

### *Text*

It is important to identify the texts used in this thesis. Heyworth's recent Oxford edition of Propertius has provided us with a thoroughly-revised and challenging text, supplemented by an enormous and detailed commentary.<sup>2</sup> While Heyworth has made some significant changes when compared with earlier versions, I have chosen to adopt his text. Where necessary, I have noted my own divergent readings, or that of Camps, whose works still serve us well.<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of recent editions of Tibullus. I shall use Murgatroyd's text for both books,<sup>4</sup> although I also regularly refer to editions by Lee (1990), Maltby (2002), and Putnam (1973). I must also mention Luck, whose Teubner and Latin-German editions provide valuable insight that supports a significant departure I take from the Anglo-American editions in Chapter III regarding *Elegy* 1.10.<sup>5</sup>

Texts used for other ancient sources may be found in the Bibliography. All Latin translations are my own, unless noted otherwise. Translations of Greek are cited in text. Where possible, references to visual art are accompanied by the appropriate citation in the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*.

### *Structure*

This thesis has three substantive chapters. In the first, I consider the importance of setting – particularly landscapes – to the overall effect of an elegy. The reader is encouraged through detailed description to visualise various settings, be they faraway exotic locations or more local, pastoral ones. Propertius and Tibullus approach these

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<sup>2</sup> Heyworth 2007; 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Camps 1961; 1967; 1985; 1965.

<sup>4</sup> Murgatroyd 1991; 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Luck 1988; 1964.

descriptions in similar ways, despite exploring different subject-matter within the overall confines of the genre. In particular, both poets include a good deal of highly pictorial detail in their settings. We shall in particular have cause to examine the relationship between descriptions of settings in erotic elegy and contemporary developments in Roman landscape painting, particularly those by the now relatively obscure figure of Studius. We find that Propertius and Tibullus evoke pictorial settings in a similar way to contemporary landscape painting.

The second chapter focuses on descriptions of persons and the erotic gaze. Through examination of a number of passages, I argue that Propertius' and Tibullus' *enargeia* appeals to the reader as spectator, or even voyeur. First, I look at *nudus Amor* (naked Love), a recurring topos in Propertius, where the nude form and its predominantly visual reception are found to be essential elements of his poetry. I then consider in more general terms the 'erotic gaze'. I compare both Propertius' and Tibullus' approaches to vision and the erotic connections between viewer and viewed. I also relate these to Hellenistic poetry and contemporary art, reinforcing the conclusions reached in Chapter I on the nexus between these areas.

The final substantive chapter examines two different aspects of our poets' *oeuvres*. Much of my thesis reveals common ground between Propertius and Tibullus, drawing together their techniques and showing how they approached their various subjects in a way that reflected certain aesthetic influences on the genre. Here, I take two very different examples, Propertius' handling of descriptions of art and Tibullus' *mimesis biou*, and consider how each is informed by Hellenistic precedents and contemporary visual artwork. We find that although Propertius and Tibullus could compose poetry that sometimes differs greatly in subject-matter, *enargeia* remains an aim, and the influence of Hellenistic poetry is ever present.

The Envoi looks forward to future lines of enquiry by considering some examples of Propertius' 'synaesthetic' qualities. It also suggests a number of other areas which would benefit from further study.

### ***Hellenistic poetry and other literary precedents***

The influence of Hellenistic poetry on Propertius' and Tibullus' work is cardinal. Day established that the origins of Latin erotic elegy lay broadly in Hellenistic

poetry.<sup>6</sup> I suggest that Roman erotic elegy in many senses picked up from where Hellenistic poetry, written between 323 and 30 BC, left off and that in the works of our elegists we can find many of the characteristic features of poets such as Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Theocritus. Discussions of and comparisons with Hellenistic poetry therefore form a recurring theme in this thesis. Alexandria in the third and second centuries BC was the ‘cultural capital’ of the Greek world, particularly under Soter and Philadelphus.<sup>7</sup> While in some ways distant from mainland Greece and the earlier classical period in which art and literature reached hitherto unprecedented levels of sophistication, Alexandria’s literati sought to reproduce the sort of cultural splendour of classical Athens.

Striking a balance between imitation and inspiration, Hellenistic poets, authors and artists developed a number of innovations that would ultimately set the scene for much of Rome’s literary and artistic achievements. The Alexandrians’ creative success was due in a substantial part to the recombination of Homeric and classical themes in a way that shed new light on old ideas, or re-presented them from new angles. Thus, Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* tells a well-known tale in a well-known genre, but with enough twists to keep the reader from dismissing it as bald plagiarism of tropes and topoi.<sup>8</sup> For example, Apollonius devotes a great deal of attention to characters other than Jason: when compared to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, Jason’s role is less dominant.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Hellenistic art before the age of Augustus developed many of the forms present in classical art: for example, the Gigantomachy frieze on the Pergamon Altar represents a high point in the depiction of movement and the treatment of various subjects.<sup>10</sup> Lions snarl, serpents coil about their foes, and the gods take up their characteristic battle positions. A giant even steps out of the composition and on to the steps. This intrusion into the viewer’s space brings the viewer into the battle, making the vivid representations of battle even more immediate.

*Enargeia* – vivid pictorial description – and its role in visualisation is one example where the link between Hellenistic and Augustan elegiac poetry is both apparent and significant. This in turn helps us to see the connection between the

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<sup>6</sup> Day 1938.

<sup>7</sup> Krevans and Sens 2006: 188-190.

<sup>8</sup> Krevans and Sens 2006: 190.

<sup>9</sup> Hunter 1998: xxviii-xxx.

<sup>10</sup> For a diagram of the Gigantomachy, see *LIMC* 4.1, ‘Gigantes’: il. 24.



Alexandrians' interest in visual art and its influence on Propertius and Tibullus, who both in their own ways build on this. The Hellenistic poets seem to prize *enargeia* as an aim in itself, though modern scholars, notably Zanker, have linked *enargeia* with other aims in Hellenistic poetry, such as pictorial realism, *mimesis biou*, and technical or scientific accuracy in description.<sup>11</sup>

I shall argue that Propertius and Tibullus may be identified as the heirs of Hellenistic vivid description. This is corroborated by the number of allusions to Hellenistic poetry. Callimachus' *Bath of Pallas* is a notable example, which exerted a considerable influence on both Propertius and Tibullus. We shall find that both poets refer to aspects of the poem. Tibullus takes the description of Aphrodite at lines 21-22 and applies it to his own characters in an unusual way in 1.8. Propertius may well be alluding to the blinding of Teiresias as an unwitting gazer in his comparison of a naked Spartan woman to Amazons bathing in the Thermodon in 3.14. Such references to Hellenistic poetry would be well-received by the learned Roman reader, who 'was expected to recognize the old themes and also to admire the new significance which they gained within a new context'.<sup>12</sup>

This is not to deny the influence of other forms of art and literature on Propertius and Tibullus. It has been noted elsewhere the Latin love elegy owes much to developments in New Comedy and there will no doubt be early Latin literature from which our poets draw inspiration.<sup>13</sup> Editors of both poets have identified verbal concordances with the works of Lucretius and Ennius. Propertius even mentions Ennius by name at 3.3.6 (*pater...Ennius*). The poems of Catullus were in the immediate past, as were Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. Both these poets were also heirs to the Hellenistic poets and would perhaps have provided a filter through which certain techniques and devices came to Propertius and Tibullus.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See especially Zanker 1987.

<sup>12</sup> Luck 1969: 87.

<sup>13</sup> See further Day 1938: 85-101.

<sup>14</sup> Catullus 66, for example, is a Latin translation of Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*. Vergil's *Georgics* and *Eclogues* were written in the bucolic style of Theocritus and Bion.

## Definitions

Several concepts, like *enargeia*, call for definition at the outset, because they are going to prove vital to the whole thesis. Others, like *mimesis biou*, will be introduced in their appropriate places.

### *Enargeia*

Zanker has already shown *enargeia* to have been in use far earlier than any other poetic, philosophical or rhetorical word denoting vividness or pictorial realism as a technique or effect.<sup>15</sup> Its relationship to the ancient understanding of *ekphrasis* (to be defined below) is straightforward: one of the *aretai* of *ekphrasis* was *enargeia*.<sup>16</sup> Consider Theon's definition of *ekphrasis*, which requires descriptive speech to bring the subject vividly before the eyes: Ἐκφρασίς ἐστι λόγος περιγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὅσιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον (*Progymn.* 118.6; my emphasis).<sup>17</sup> Webb and Zanker have both treated the origins, definitions, and uses of *enargeia* at length. However, it is important to establish the sense of *enargeia* as I use it in this thesis, so we must engage in an analysis that is compact yet sufficiently comprehensive to serve our purposes. Many of the ancient examples are drawn from rhetorical texts; many secondary sources predominantly focus on *enargeia* and descriptive techniques in a rhetorical context. Yet *enargeia* was in fact more widespread in its application across literary genres, an assertion this thesis will show in the context of Augustan erotic elegy.

An orator who employed *enargeia* effectively would be able to make the listener a spectator; the appeal was therefore predominantly visual. Dionysius of Halicarnassus also offers a number of insights into *enargeia*. In the *Lysias*, he outlines what for him were the standout aspects of Lysias' techniques. Dionysius

<sup>15</sup> Zanker 1981: 305-307. For a recent review and analysis of studies on *enargeia*, see Otto 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Zanker 1981: 300-301.

<sup>17</sup> Latin definitions of *enargeia*, translated variously as *demonstratio*, *evidentia*, *illustratio*, *representatio*, or *sub oculos subiecto* (Zanker 1981: 298), display a remarkably similarity to this standard Greek rhetorical formula. For example, the *ad Herennium* defines *demonstratio* thus:

Demonstratio est cum ita uerbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse uideatur. (*Ad Herenn.* 4.55.68)

*Demonstratio* is when a thing is expressed in words in such a way the the action seems to be happening before our eyes, and the thing seems to be before our eyes.

describes how Lysias achieved *enargeia* and, importantly, the effect this had on his audiences:

ἔχει δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐνάργειαν πολλὴν ἢ Λυσίου λέξις. αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ δυνάμεις τις ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἄγουσα τὰ λεγόμενα, γίγνεται δ' ἐκ τῆς τῶν παρακολουθούντων λήψεως. ὁ δὲ προσέχων τὴν διάνοιαν τοῖς Λυσίου λόγοις οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται σκαιὸς ἢ δυσάρεστος ἢ βραδὺς τὸν νοῦν, ὅς οὐχ ὑπολήπεται γινόμενα τὰ δηλούμενα ὁρᾶν καὶ ὥσπερ παροῦσιν οἷς ἂν ὁ ῥήτωρ εἰσάγῃ προσώποις ὁμιλεῖν. (Lys. 7)

Vividness (ἐνάργειαν) is a quality which the style of Lysias has in abundance. This consists in a certain power he has of conveying the things he is describing to the senses of his audience, and it arises out of his grasp of circumstantial detail. Nobody who applies his mind to the speeches of Lysias will be so obtuse, insensitive or slow-witted that he will not feel that he can see the actions which are being described going on and that he is meeting face-to-face the characters in the orator's story. (trans. Usher)

Most significant for our purposes is the appeal to sight: yet again, the listener is put in the position of spectator or even eyewitness. Dionysius is convinced that the target audience would not have missed the ocular appeal, nor would they have been unable to picture in their minds' eyes that which Lysias described. Anyone who failed to do so must have been obtuse (*skaios*), insensitive (*dusarestos*), or slow-witted (*bradus ton noun*). We also learn that circumstantial detail can help provide the necessary vividness that leads to *enargeia*.<sup>18</sup> Circumstantial detail is also mentioned by Ps.-Demetrius as enhancing the vividness of a description (*Eloc.* 217). Overall, Dionysius' critique of Lysias' *enargeia* places a lot of emphasis on giving highly detailed descriptions. Detailed description is certainly a criterion for *enargeia*, although we shall see that other ancient critics were prepared to consider subtler use of such description than an all-out visual feast or warts-and-all characterisation.

Plutarch identified such *enargeia* in the writings of Thucydides:

ὁ δ' οὖν Θουκυδίδης ἀεὶ τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμιλλᾶται τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἷον θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα περὶ τοὺς ὁρῶντας ἐκπληκτικὰ καὶ ταρακτικὰ πάθη τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ἐνεργάσασθαι λιχνευόμενος. (Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 347a)

<sup>18</sup> Quintilian uses *accidentia* to denote attendant circumstances that produce a similar effect (*Inst. Or.* 8.3.70).

Thucydides is always striving for this vividness in his writing, as he eagerly desires to make the listener a spectator, as it were, and to produce in the minds of his readers the feelings of astonishment and consternation which were experienced by those who witnessed the events.

(trans. Webb 2009: 20)

There are a number of similarities to Dionysius' assessment of Lysias' speeches. Thucydides' *enargeia* is a key stylistic feature and produces several effects among his audience. First, there is the sensory transformation: the aural reception becomes a visual one, in that the mind's eye is able to visualise that which is being described verbally. The use of *gignomena*, a verb in the present tense, has been noted as enhancing the 'presentist' quality of *enargeia*;<sup>19</sup> this is not just a retelling: the listener is actually engaged in what is going on.

Secondly, the listener experiences astonishment (*ekplektika*) and consternation (*taraktika*). Ps.-Longinus treats *ekplexis* as an effect distinct from *enargeia* (*De Subl.* 15.1), arguing the one to be limited to poetry and the other to rhetoric; nevertheless, he seems to be writing from a similar critical viewpoint to Plutarch.

Finally, the listener does not just experience astonishment and consternation in an isolated or removed sense; he or she experiences these things as if he or she were in the position of those who were there when whatever is being described happened. So the spectator in fact becomes an eyewitness. This transformation of the listener's role from mere receptor of information to spectator via his imagination to actual eyewitness (he really *is* there) is the result of well-deployed *enargeia*.

According to Quintilian, what sets a vivid presentation or description of something apart from a simple recounting or *narratio* is whether it appeals to the mind's eye (*Inst. Or.* 8.3.62). A speech, for example, will be lacklustre and less convincing if an orator cannot succeed in this appeal. *Enargeia* was therefore something that an orator used to add spice to his speech and to enhance its believability; by 'showing' rather than 'telling', an orator will produce a more powerful emotional effect on his audience (6.2.32). Quintilian offers a number of passages, drawn principally from Cicero and Vergil, to illustrate his point. One passage in particular, taken from Cicero's *Verrine Orations*, is analysed by Quintilian in a way that gives a more expansive view what constitutes *enargeia*:

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<sup>19</sup> Webb 2009: 20 n. 20.

An quisquam tam procul a concipiendis imaginibus rerum abest ut non, cum illa in Verrem legit: ‘stetit soleatus praetor populi Romani cum pallio purpureo tunicaque talari muliercula nixus in litore,’ non solum ipsos intueri uideatur et locum et habitum, sed quaedam etiam ex iis quae dicta non sunt sibi ipse adstruat? (Quint. *Inst. Or.* 8.3.64)

Yet is anyone so far from capable of shaping images of things that, when he reads the passage in the *Verrines*, ‘the praetor of the Roman people stood in his slippers on the shore in purple tunic and ankle-length robe leaning on that contemptible harlot,’ he not only seems to gaze upon them, the location, and their appearance, but indeed he of his own accord adds for himself some things which were not mentioned.

Quintilian goes on to give examples of the sort of thing that he imagines as he reads the passage. Not only does he visualise some more physical details such as the eyes, facial expressions, and an affectionate if improper pat, he gets into the minds of the audience. They stand, looking at Verres and his woman, in ‘silent loathing’ and ‘frightened shame’ (trans. Webb 2009: 108). Part of this fits with our understanding of *enargeia* as developed from Dionysius and Plutarch, in that Quintilian’s putative Ciceronian audience assumes the position of an eyewitness: he places himself in the position of spectator on the scene and can imagine what the emotional response of the audience was. Quintilian goes beyond, for example, Dionysius, who focuses on the fullness of Lysias’ descriptions as being the best way to create *enargeia*. For Quintilian, vivid visual description is but a springboard for the audience, who are then free to embellish and enhance the images conveyed by the speaker. *Enargeia* sparks the imagination through its appeal to the mind’s eye. A successful evocation of *enargeia* must still contain sufficiently vivid description so as to achieve this effect.

Innocenti has commented at length on Cicero’s theory of vivid description.<sup>20</sup> After a brief survey of Cicero’s works that discuss ‘vivid description’ – her shorthand for a number of descriptive techniques – she settles on the *Verrines* as a model.<sup>21</sup> Cicero’s vivid description encompasses the senses of hearing, smell, and touch,<sup>22</sup> but most importantly, it is visualising what Cicero describes that carries the greatest impact.<sup>23</sup> The sheer number of techniques employed to encourage the reader (or listener, although the *Actio Secunda* from which Innocenti draws her examples was in

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<sup>20</sup> Innocenti 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Innocenti 1994: 355-361.

<sup>22</sup> Innocenti 1994: 370.

<sup>23</sup> Innocenti 1994: 371.

fact never delivered) raises visual appeal above all other sensory appeals. Movement, descriptions of particular objects, temporal manipulation, and contrast are all cited as forming part of Cicero's vivid description.<sup>24</sup> Innocenti argues that the most important aspect of this description is not so much the fullness of detail, but whether there is sufficient information given to the reader to arouse an emotional response, and to encourage the reader to imagine the scene.<sup>25</sup> She does not, however, make the link between her use of 'vivid description' and *enargeia* explicit, but there is a concerted effort to support her analysis of Cicero's work through references to Quintilian's descriptive theory, which we have already covered briefly. In this way, it is possible to bridge the terminology gap and use Innocenti's findings for our purposes. Therefore, we can conclude that Innocenti's attempt to identify vivid description as a major feature of the *Verrines* is successful; moreover, she also provides an excellent basis for our own purposes, namely understanding how to produce descriptions imbued with *enargeia*.

Part of what makes Cicero's description of Verres so successful is that the audience could form for themselves an even greater and more detailed scene than what was described to them. Concomitant with creating *enargeia*, then, are *phantasiai* or *uisiones*, imaginings which play in the mind of the orator (or poet, historian, rhetor) and are through vivid description 'transmitted' to the audience. Quintilian states that a skilled orator has mastery of *phantasiai* and is therefore capable of evoking all sorts of emotional responses in his audience (*Inst. Or.* 6.2.29-30).<sup>26</sup> Unsurprisingly, Quintilian emphasizes the role of sight: imaginings allow us to visualise things 'so that we seem to see them with our eyes and be in their presence' (*ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere uideamur*; 6.2.29). Ps.-Longinus has a similar view, claiming that a speaker will achieve greatest success when he and his audience are both visualising what he describes (*De Subl.* 15.1).

We know that *enargeia* was the term of choice for Hellenistic critics of poetry. Philodemus mentions *enargeia* in a technical sense while refuting a Hellenistic critic's assertion that *enargeia* was poetry's main aim (*De Poesia* 5, col. 3.12-31). Zanker concludes that this provides us with solid evidence that *enargeia* was not only a well-established term during Hellenistic times, but that it was in fact 'specifically

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<sup>24</sup> Innocenti 1994: 370-373.

<sup>25</sup> Innocenti 1994: 374-379.

<sup>26</sup> See Webb (2009: 95-96) for a more in-depth analysis of *phantasia* and its role in achieving *enargeia*.

relevant to poetry’ and ‘central to all later literary and rhetorical theory on the subject’.<sup>27</sup>

A recapitulation of our findings is at this point helpful. We have seen that *enargeia* is a powerful tool for anyone who must describe something to another. A number of ancient literary critics identified various qualities that make up successful *enargeia*, all of which relate to visualisation in both the speaker’s and audience’s minds. Sight is the chief concern of *enargeia*, although it is possible to have a wider sensory appeal. Through visualisation of what is being described, an audience member becomes a spectator or even an eyewitness, present at the time of the scene the speaker relates. According to some, it is even possible to visualise more than what is offered, using the speaker’s appeal to sight as an invitation to flesh out the scene with even more detail. Where these things are done successfully, *enargeia* is the result.

A major thread of this thesis will be to identify where *enargeia* is incorporated into Propertius’ and Tibullus’ *oeuvres*. It will become apparent that *enargeia* is in fact a significant feature of their poetry, one which enhances the overall success of their descriptions and therefore their subject-matter, especially in the appeal to sight as an erotic sense. At some points, such as the description of Propertius’ *ménage à trois* in 4.8, the attendant circumstances and the abundance of visually appealing detail create an effect similar to *enargeia* as defined by Dionysius:

cum fieret nostro totiens iniuria lecto,	27
mutato uolui castra mouere toro.	
Phyllis Auentinae quaedam est uicina Dianae:	
sobria grata parum; cum bibit, omne decet.	30
altera Tarpeios inter stat Teia lucos:	
candida, sed potae non satis unus erit.	
his ego constitui noctem lenire uocatis	
et Venere ignota furta nouare mea.	
unus erat tribus in secreta lectulus herba.	35
quaeris discubitus? inter utrumque fui.	
Lygdamus ad cyathos uitrique aestiua supellex	
et Methymnaei grata salua meri;	
Nile, tuus tibicen erat, crotalistria, Orontes,	
(haec facilis spargi munda sine arte rosa);	40

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<sup>27</sup> Zanker 1981: 307.

Magnus et ipse suos breuiter contractus in artus

iactabat truncas ad caua buxa manus.

42 (Prop. 4.8.27-42)

Since offence was always being done to our tryst, I decided that I'd change bed and move camp. A certain Phyllis is neighbour to Diana on the Aventine Way: sober, she's barely pleasant; when knocking them back, very agreeable. Another one – Teia – lives between the Tarpeian groves: she's lovely, but when smashed, one man won't be enough. I decided to loosen up the evening and spice up my affairs with a never-before-tried shag by inviting these two over. For us three there was just one little couch in a discreet backyard. You ask of the arrangement? I was between the others. There was Lygdamus at the ladle, a suite of summer glassware and the pleasing taste of unmixed Lesbian; Nile was your flautist, Orontes the castanet-dancer (effortlessly elegant, she didn't mind being showered with roses); and Magnus himself, briefly twisted into his own arms, was gyrating his stout limbs to the hollow box-wood flute.

Propertius' description of the three-way he is having in Cynthia's (unexpectedly brief) absence is replete with various details, from information about his two lovers to the location of the *lenticulus* to positions and the accompanying audience. Even the type of glassware and wine are mentioned. There are several direct appeals to sight, among them the arrangement of Propertius on the couch and the actions of Lygdamus, Nile, and especially Orontes and Magnus, who complete the picture with their movement. The reader is addressed directly twice (*quaeris* and *tuus*), and the whole scene with its details and attendant circumstances is easy to visualise.

On other occasions, a brief description is designed to encourage the reader to complete the scene in greater detail in his own mind in a way that recalls Quintilian's analysis of the passage from the *Verrines*:

sed patrii seruare Lares: aluistis et idem,

cursarem uestros cum tener ante pedes. (Tib. 1.10.15-16)

Lares of my fathers, save me as you looked after me when as a child I ran around your feet.

What is described here is vivid but brief; many potential details are omitted. Nevertheless, such a description of the young Tibullus running around the representations of the household gods appeals to the mind's eye. Just as we imagine more than is given when Cicero describes Verres standing on the shore, so here too



our imaginations may wander, sparked by the charming little vignette of halcyon days.

Finally, some appeals to sight are couched within larger passages of description; the effect here is to assist the reader in visualising the whole scene by directing him or her with a visual cue:

non tibi iam somnos, non illa reliquet ocellos:	11	
illa ferox animis alligat una uiros.		
a, mea contemptus quotiens ad limina curres!		
cum tibi singultu fortia uerba cadent,		
et tremulus maestis orietur fletibus horror,	15	
et timor informem ducet in ore notam,		
et quaecumque uoles fugient tibi uerba querenti,		
nec poteris, qui sis aut ubi, nosse miser,		
tum graue seruitium nostrae cogere puellae		
discere et exclusum quid sit abire domo.	20	(Prop. 1.5.11-20)

For you there will be no sleep, she will not relinquish your eyes: she is one-of-a-kind fierce and binds men with her passions. Ah! How often to my door will you run, rejected! When tough talk fails you, sobbing, and trembling dread rises with those fretful tears, and fear traces an ugly line across your face, and whatever words you want to say are lost in your whimpering, then you won't know, you wretch, who or where you are, then you will be forced to learn the harsh servitude of our girl and what it is to be locked outside the house.

This description is closer to the sort of *enargeia* discussed by Quintilian and Ps.-Longinus when they say that a successful orator must ensure that his audience sees in their minds what he sees in his. The emotional tone here is striking and dramatic, as Propertius tries to dissuade Gallus from becoming too attached to Cynthia. It is not an overly visual passage, but the two occasions where there is a reference to sight or a visual description are striking visual cues: first, Cynthia captures men's eyes and will not let them go (11); secondly, fear manifests itself as an ugly mark on one's face (16). Other effects Cynthia has on the *amator* tend to be emotional or psychosomatic in a way that does not appeal directly to sight. These are, therefore, more difficult to visualise, although to an extent the experiences Propertius describes to Gallus are common coin. In any case, the visual cues should help the reader to 'see' what the poet himself 'sees'. This is a slightly less obvious form of *enargeia*, one which is somewhat removed from Dionysius' definition. Nevertheless, the effect on the reader

is surely to vivify the description in the mind's eye, making him a spectator or eyewitness, and thereby satisfying the most important criterion of *enargeia*.

### *Ekphrasis*

The term *ekphrasis* has been the source of some controversy in classical scholarship. The main complaint centres on the different meanings ancient and modern scholars ascribe to the term. Many scholars, among them Graham Zanker and Ruth Webb, have pointed out that the 'ancient and modern categories of ekphrasis are...formed on entirely different grounds'.<sup>28</sup> The ancient one could be a description of anything at all, with a focus on the impact of the description on the listener. The modern use of the term focuses on the referent, restricting *ekphraseis* to descriptions of works of art. Although both categories are related through sensory appeal, primarily to sight, and vivid description, we shall see that there are a number of significant differences between the ancient and modern definitions, something which can (and often does) lead to problematic usage of the term.

*Ekphrasis* in both ancient literary criticism and rhetoric was a technique whereby the composer of a speech or other literary work achieved the effect of turning listener into spectator; that is, something (anything) was described in such a way that it became a coherent and detailed image in the mind of the listener. This sensory transformation was the chief indicator of *ekphrasis* and was, in the hands of the best composers, a prime example of *enargeia*. *Ekphrasis* first becomes part of critical terminology in the second or first century BC, in Ps.-Demetrius' *De Elocutione* (165).<sup>29</sup> A standard definition taken from the first-century AD rhetor Theon states that '*ekphrasis* is a speech that brings the subject matter vividly (*enargōs*) before the eyes' (*Progymn.* 118.7; trans. Webb 2009: 14). A number of other rhetors, among them Hermogenes, Menander Rhetor, Sopatros Rhetor, and Syrianos, and grammarians such as Quintilian provide similar, almost formulaic, definitions.<sup>30</sup>

By contrast, the modern literary critic has too often pigeonholed the evidently expansive term *ekphrasis* into meaning just 'descriptions of works of art', in effect turning what was an example of successful *ekphrasis* into the complete definition.

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<sup>28</sup> Webb 2009: 7-8.

<sup>29</sup> Zanker 2003: 59.

<sup>30</sup> Webb 2009: 14.

Webb provides a thorough account of the recent history of *ekphrasis*, noting that examples such as Philostratus' *Eikones*, one of the first ancient literary descriptions of works of art, have ultimately led scholars down a one-way street in terms of the identification and analysis of *ekphrasis*.<sup>31</sup> In fact, as Zanker points out, only Nicolaus includes works of art as its own category of *ekphrasis*.<sup>32</sup> He argues that *ekphrasis* be restored to its original broad meaning, and offers *enargeia* as a more flexible term for the sort of pictorial vividness or realism that one might expect to find in a description of a work of art – or anywhere else, for that matter.

### *Integration and Supplementation*

Zanker's study of viewing in Hellenistic art and literature draws attention to two types of reader or viewer involvement which artists and writers encouraged in their audiences.<sup>33</sup> One of these is integration, the other supplementation. Each was used so that the experience of the reader or viewer was heightened through a deeper engagement with the work. Both of these techniques are present in Propertius and Tibullus, especially where there is an appeal to sight; it is no surprise, then, to find reader integration or supplementation in passages that also achieve *enargeia*. The relationship between integration and supplementation on the one hand, and *enargeia* on the other, is complementary: where the reader is invited into the scene or to supplement it with his or her own experiences and imaginings, the scene's *enargeia* is much sharper, and the reader is more involved.

Reader integration occurs when the reader is placed in the scene, in such a way that he or she can not only imagine what is going on but be in some way a participant. The most straightforward method of achieving this effect is to include the reader with an internal audience, as when Tibullus employs the second-person plural imperative *cernite* in 2.1.15. More sophisticated uses of integration include the use of the second-person singular while withholding the subject (e.g. Prop. 1.8A). Until it is made clear who the subject is, the reader steps in to fill the gap. This is an effective way of drawing the reader into the scene. There are parallels with visual art. Zanker's study of reader or viewer integration in Hellenistic poetry and art deals with

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<sup>31</sup> Webb 2009: 28-38.

<sup>32</sup> Zanker 2003: 59. See also Webb 2009: 61-62, Table 3.1.

<sup>33</sup> Zanker 2004.

these in a more detailed manner, using as one example the ‘white’ and ‘red’ sculptures of Marsyas to show how the viewer is put in the position of the absent executioner.<sup>34</sup> He also cites von Blanckenhagen’s appreciation of the sculpture of the crouching Aphrodite,<sup>35</sup> where ‘it is the viewer who surprises’ the naked goddess.<sup>36</sup>

The final form of integration to which I refer is that which relies on vivid pictorialism, where the poet provides a verbal sketch that is almost equivalent in its spatial and compositional awareness to, say, a contemporary Roman landscape painting. Again, the role of *enargeia* in the successful integration of the reader here needs little comment, other than to note that a reader was undoubtedly better placed to picture the scene described if he or she had knowledge of an example of the same in visual art, something which we shall cover more deeply later. For example, in Propertius 1.20 the description of the wellspring at Pegae contains enough compositional detail for a Roman who was aware of developments in landscape painting not only to picture it in his mind but also to use contemporary visual art to sharpen his mental image.

The second type of reader involvement that I wish to address here is supplementation. This is where the reader is given only some of the details required to form a complete picture of what is being described. He or she must supply the rest. When Quintilian states that he pictures more detail than is given by Cicero in the description of Verres standing on the shore he is engaging in supplementation. Zanker has identified a number of examples in Hellenistic art and literature that appeal to the viewer in the same way, asking him or her to fill in the blanks. The Sleeping Ariadne, for one, requires the reader to supplement a fleeing Theseus or arriving Dionysus, or both.<sup>37</sup> The *Heracles Leontophonus* ([Theoc.] *Id.* 25) is an excellent example drawn from Hellenistic literature. The reader is never given an explicit account of the cleaning of the Augean stables, but is instead expected to capitalise on the visual clues included in a description of the surrounding landscape given by the farmhand to supplement this narrative.<sup>38</sup> This sort of visual sophistication can be observed at its most pointed during the Hellenistic period, where innovative treatment of well-known subject-matter was a necessity for poets in order

<sup>34</sup> Zanker 2004: 33-34, ill. 7a-b. *LIMC* 6.1, ‘Marsyas I’: p. 374; *LIMC* 6.2, ‘Marsyas I’: ill. 61a-b.

<sup>35</sup> Von Blanckenhagen 1975. *LIMC* 2.2, ‘Aphrodite’: il. 1018.

<sup>36</sup> Zanker 1996: 413.

<sup>37</sup> Zanker 2004: 32-33. *LIMC* 3.2 add., ‘Ariadne’: il. 118.

<sup>38</sup> Zanker 1996: 413-416.

both to differentiate themselves from their predecessors and to provide something novel for their readership. Consequently, it is the Hellenistic approach to supplementation that informs our study of Propertius and Tibullus as heirs to this visual technique.

Two brief examples of Propertius' and Tibullus' employment of supplementation will suffice for now; the technique will be discussed frequently throughout this thesis. As I shall argue in depth below,<sup>39</sup> Propertius leaves it to the reader to supply a fitting background to the scene in 1.3 when he comes across the sleeping Cynthia. The reader has already been treated to a number of short descriptions of sleeping mythical women, which provide an appropriate artistic context and tone for the setting. But Propertius limits details about Cynthia's own bedroom to the window, the lyre and the distaff and spindle. The reader is therefore required to provide an appropriate setting, based perhaps on everyday knowledge, and maybe assisted by any visual art depictions known to him. Tibullus, too, provides us with examples of supplementation. We shall find later, for example, that his dream of an idyllic country retreat in 1.5.19-36 is described vividly, but is only partially 'complete'; the reader must take his cue from the vivid descriptions and continue painting the picture.

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<sup>39</sup> See below, p. 78.

## I: Landscape and setting

### *Introduction*

Propertius and Tibullus rely heavily on the evocation and presentation of a scene to convey the emotional tone of their poetry. This chapter examines the importance of setting in the poetry of Propertius and Tibullus. We are concerned with how vivid description of landscape features or other aspects of the dramatic setting contributes to the overall thrust of a poem, and what effect this has on the overall success of a narrative scene. In particular, both Propertius and Tibullus display a marked hostility toward travel and foreign locations, as well as concern for what their respective mistresses may get up to in their absence.

Where a landscape or other setting has been afforded a prominent place in a poem, it is likely that the accompanying descriptions are of such detail that the reader is able to picture them in his mind. Sometimes there is a direct appeal to the reader to do so, as when Propertius decides that he might join Cynthia in the countryside (2.19). His description of what Cynthia will see can also be read as a direct appeal to the reader to visualise the countryside:

sola eris, et solos spectabis, Cynthia, montes  
 et pecus et fines pauperis agricolae.  
 ...  
 illic assidue tauros spectabis arantes  
 et uitem docta ponere falce comas.<sup>40</sup> (Prop. 2.19.7-8; 11-12)

You will be alone, Cynthia, and you will gaze on the lonesome mountains and the flock and the fields of the poor farmer... There you will gaze on the oxen ploughing and the vine giving up its foliage to the shrewd sickle.

*Spectabis* is used twice and encourages not only Cynthia but also the reader to become a viewer. This in turn helps to make what is taking place in that setting all the more believable. Indeed, despite our elegists' frequent indulgence in constructed

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<sup>40</sup> The correspondence, whatever the sequence of imitation, between Propertius and Tibullus is evident, with *et uitem docta ponere falce comas* following Tibullus' *hic uiridem dura caedere falce comam* (Tib. 1.7.34) in both construction and sentiment.

fantasies and in the face of what is sometimes hyperactive anxiety, the reader nevertheless receives a compelling and very real depiction of the scene, and, through various modes of supplementation and integration, is drawn into highly artistic settings, experiencing with heightened vividness the poem's emotional tones.

At the same time as Propertius and Tibullus were composing their elegies, Roman painters were breaking new ground in landscape painting. We find a notable change from the people-focused compositions of Hellenistic poetry and a special interest in the wider environment in which activity occurs. Both composition and detail are taken in new directions. I believe that there was in fact a close correspondence between artistic developments such as these in painting, and the sort of interest we find in landscape and description in Propertius and Tibullus. When Cynthia looks out on to the mountains and countryside in 2.19, she is presented with a scene not unlike what one might expect in a landscape painting. Papangelis discusses an excellent example drawn from Richardson's commentary on Propertius where the poet describes at his imagined grave in 2.13.33-34 the sort of tomb depicted in many landscape paintings from Pompeii, shaded by a tree.<sup>41</sup> Whether one was directly influencing the other is and likely will remain uncertain; what is clear is that there was a high level of interplay between the visual and verbal arts, resulting in poetry achieving with words the effect achieved by painting, and vice-versa. Our study of descriptions of landscape and setting would not, then, be complete without an examination of the innovations of contemporary painters.

We begin our analysis with a close reading of Propertius 1.11. Cynthia has gone to Baiae, presumably with a rival lover, and Propertius is left in Rome bewailing her absence and infidelity. We find that the landscape and in particular the water around Baiae is elevated to the level of accomplice to Cynthia's alleged infidelity. We then move on to consider other forms of scene setting in both Propertius and Tibullus. In particular, we focus on the detailed composition of Propertius' Hylas poem, 1.20, and its relationship with contemporary painting and Hellenistic poetry. We also examine a different form of scene setting in Tibullus 1.5, one where the reader is required to supply much of the setting based on the description of the foreground action, an approach similar to some extant landscape and sacral-idyllic paintings. Finally, two different examples of the motif of the journey are discussed.

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<sup>41</sup> Papangelis 1987: 71-72, citing Richardson 1977.

The technique of reader integration is discussed with respect to Propertius 1.8A and 1.8B, while Tibullus 1.3 provides an interesting model for exploring some of the allusive qualities inherent in descriptions of setting.

On top of this, we shall see that there is always the ever-present irony within the setting the poet creates: for the elegiac *amator* there is only the *fantasy* of domestic happiness; as an illicit lover, he can never *really* hope to hold what he laments is being taken from him. Tibullus, for example, is often described as inhabiting an amorphous dreamlike fantasyland. So in 1.5, when the brothel madam has locked Tibullus out, we see him at his poetic best, crafting an imagined fantasyland where he is farmer-lover to Delia, who plays the role of the loyal and happy rural wife (19-36). And again in 1.3, while stranded on Corcyra, he dreams of the bucolic idealism of the Golden Age. But Tibullus' fantasyland is neither vague nor dull: it is described with sharp focus and vivid description to appeal to the mind's eye. The audience in many ways indulges these fantasies, too. Poetic visual description defies its merely aural reception; our elegists construct their fantasies and realities with such vividness that the audience is drawn into the dramatic setting as a participant, or can at least compose a detailed setting in their minds.

### ***Baiae's dangerous water***

The eleventh poem of Propertius' *Monobiblos* provides some excellent examples of how Propertius uses vivid description both to create a detailed landscape that appeals to the mind's eye of the reader and to evoke certain reactions from the reader based on the role that landscape plays within the poem. Propertius implores Cynthia to leave the holiday resort of Baiae and return to the relative 'safety' of Rome, where he remains.<sup>42</sup> Baiae had a seedy reputation in Roman minds: Cicero in the *Pro Caelio* alludes to the exotic temptations and lascivious offerings that could be found in such a place (*Cael.* 27-28). Propertius 1.11 takes this sentiment a step further, accusing the setting itself of being complicit in Cynthia's alleged affairs. In doing so, he successfully employs descriptive techniques and mythological allusion to link the landscape to his own jealous, anxious, and lonesome state of mind:

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<sup>42</sup> See Camps 1961: 69.



Ecquid te tepidis cessantem, Cynthia, Bais  
qua iacet Herculeis semita litoribus... (Prop. 1.11.1-2)

While you, Cynthia, are dallying in pleasant Baiae, where a pathway lies on the Herculean shore...

Cynthia's attention is entirely consumed by her surroundings. Baiae is geographically distant from Rome, and its spatial distance is compounded further through the mythological reference, in that there is a 'reality gap' whereby Baiae seems even further from Rome than it actually is.<sup>43</sup> In mentioning Hercules' causeway, Propertius also suggests another sense of 'distance': Hercules' heroic deed in this location, the subject of a celebrated myth, stands in stark contrast to the less-than-heroic activities that now preoccupy the time of those who frequent Baiae.

The second couplet continues to set Baiae apart, and introduces further mythological references, these being connected to more distant locations again:

et modo Thesproti mirantem subdita regno  
proxima Misenis aequora nobilibus... (Prop. 1.11.3-4)

And marvelling at the kingdom of Thesprotus, near the seas of noble Misenum...

Cynthia is confronted with waters from Thesprotus' kingdom somehow near Misenum. Thesprotus was the king of Epirus, although there is some association between Epirus and the coastal region around Baiae.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, even if Propertius is merely commenting on the local region and the movement of waters from one place to another, his choice of words – bringing in the Epirote king – casts exotic overtones over the holiday, and removes it further from Propertius' and Cynthia's 'home' in Rome. The water described is in constant motion, shifting from

<sup>43</sup> Poem 1.12 builds on this, measuring out the distance between Propertius and Cynthia by relating it in geographical terms:

tam multa illa meo divisa est milia lecto  
quantum Hypanis Veneto dissidet Eridano. (Prop. 1.12.4-5)

She is separated from my bed by as many miles as the Hypanis is far away from the Venetian Eridanus.

<sup>44</sup> Camps 1961: 70 suggests several possibilities why Epirus and Avernus – the likely lake in question – have been linked.

place to place with the tides. Cynthia, gazing upon these things, is perhaps also touched by these well-travelled waters, which disrupt the constancy and stability Propertius imagines his relationship with Cynthia had at Rome. Propertius' love struggles to find a foothold in Cynthia's heart, which he fears has been carried away by Baiae's distractions and, perhaps, a rival:

nostris cura subit, memores adducere noctes?  
 ecquis in extremo pectore restat amor?  
 an te nescioquis simulatis ignibus hostis  
 sustulit e nostris, Cynthia, carminibus? (Prop. 1.11.5-8)

Does any care for me come upon you, to bring you night-time remembrances? Does any love remain at the bottom of your heart? Or has some rival with his feigned passions carried you away from my poems, Cynthia?

It is here where the importance of a vividly imagined setting comes to the fore. Propertius' concern is a standard one, that his girl will be led into temptation because he is not there to 'supervise' her. His distress is sharpened by the space. A coastal resort lapped by exotic waters is an invitation to Cynthia to get 'carried away'. Safer havens for Cynthia are imagined, all where the waters are controlled, and form the second part of *Elegy* 1.11, representing, as Saylor duly recognises, a diminution of 'dangers', slowly moving back towards Propertius' Roman *domus*.<sup>45</sup> These descriptions are more than mere transitions, however. Instead, Propertius lingers on the imagery, and it is clear that, again, the water is particularly significant. The attention to pictorial detail is precise; although these are imaginings, the reader is drawn into the scene and, as we shall see, is encouraged, if not forced, to experience Propertius' worries.

In the next part of the poem, Propertius expresses a number of wishes and tries to tempt Cynthia with 'safer' waters. So the danger associated with Baiae's coast is diminished by the substitution of a lake for the dangerous openness of the sea. In one couplet, Propertius evokes a striking image of a little boat bobbing in a large – but comparatively more controlled – lake:

atque utinam mage te remis confisa minutis

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<sup>45</sup> Saylor 1975: 126.

*paruula Lucrina cumba moretur aqua...* (Prop. 1.11.9-10)

Or would that you rather were kept on the Lucrine lake in a little boat, confident in its tiny oars...

The detail is arresting. The *paruula cumba* is dwarfed by the Lucrine waters and the mountainous backdrop.<sup>46</sup> The nature of the paddling, expressed in the words *remis confisa minutis*, is especially vivid, conveying a sense of motion to an image that would also be at home as a static example of landscape painting. On top of this, the words *paruula* and *minutis* add to the boat's smallness when compared with the wider setting. *Moretur* is an interesting word. Cynthia is in one sense 'delayed', but the sense is greater than this, with *moretur* taking on the quality of 'holding the attention of', 'amusing', or perhaps even 'distracting from' the temptations of more 'playful' locations like Baiae.

The next body of water is smaller in size again, and this time, rather than the water moving Cynthia, it is she who moves herself through the water, taking a greater degree of control over her actions. Propertius tries to tempt her with the good swimming at Teuthras, where the water parts easily, and a simple forward stroke would be enough to occupy Cynthia; the lake itself seems devoid of immoral temptations. The water is shallow, enclosed, and strikingly different to the waters of Baiae:

*aut teneat clausam tenui Teuthrantis in unda  
alternae facilis cedere lympa manu...* (Prop. 1.11.11-12)

Or that she be held secure by the smooth waters of Teuthras, easily parting for her arm-over-arm.

Cynthia cannot get far: propelled only by her hands (we learn elsewhere they are slender: *longae...manus*; 2.2.5) she is even less mobile than the tiny boat. Nevertheless, we can picture the smooth strokes of a swimmer, the athletic motion

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<sup>46</sup> For a similar effect, a landscape painting from the Villa at Boscorecase depicts two small boats in the middle of an expanse of water, while in the background there is a shoreline with buildings and small figures. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Inv. 9482. Von Blanckenhagen 1990: pl. 56.2.

giving the scene a real sense of *energeia*.<sup>47</sup> The intimacy of the description of alternating strokes in the little pool that would keep Cynthia contained (*clausam*) reduces the scale and sense of space considerably. Gone are the flowing waters that journeyed from the distant, exotic East; Cynthia instead would swim in a static pool.

The final third of the poem is particularly interesting. Here, the dramatic setting, emotion, and character merge. Propertius' wish that Cynthia be anywhere but Baiae culminates in Cynthia literally becoming the *domus*: *tu mihi sola domus, Cynthia, sola parentes...* (1.11.23). Just as Cynthia's separation from the city of Rome and a physical *domus* leaves her imperilled by temptation, so too do Propertius' anxieties and fears conquer him, leaving him alone and lost: *sine te uitae cura sit ulla meae* (22). The safe connotations of the *domus* apply in each case. What makes this all the more intriguing is that Cynthia, possibly acting here as a professional mistress and at Baiae as an escort for another wealthy man, has become an idealised *matrona*, faithful, loyal, and chaste. Propertius, in no uncertain terms, has redefined Cynthia as a representation of the familial home, one thing that in reality he could never experience with her. The resulting juxtaposition of whore and home jars on one level – reminding us of the fantastic nature of elegy – but on another is pronounced and couched in terms so emotive and powerful (it is expressed in the indicative) that an audience cannot help but feel the searing edge of Propertius' complaint.

Troubled waters underpin the entire poem, and accompany Propertius' fears that Cynthia may be led astray at Baiae. Indeed, matters are such that Propertius seems to accuse the coastal waters of being agents, or at the very least accessories after the fact, in Cynthia's affair. She listens to the rival's whispered blandishments 'composed on a silent shore' (13-14). The description *tacito litore* is ambiguous and illustrates the feelings Propertius has toward the natural surroundings. Does he mean that the shore is deserted and therefore discreet, so there are no witnesses to this infidelity? Perhaps the silence is evocative of his own loneliness. Or does he mean that the coast is a silent witness to this seduction, so it is itself complicit? Personifying the shore adds to the vividness of the setting; it also fits well with the increasingly active role the landscape takes in Cynthia's alleged affair. The ambiguity, most likely deliberate, allows for the latter's possibility. 'That shore' (*ista...litora*; 27) then becomes the source of discord and distress. And it is the

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<sup>47</sup> Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1411b 24-25 notes that the quality of 'being at work' – *energeia* – is a major contributor to the vividness of a metaphor. See further Webb 2009: 85-86.

landscape again that will lead chaste girls astray: *litora quae fuerunt castis inimica puellis* (29). Note again the integration of the setting with the rival: initially, Cynthia was to be tempted by the feigned passion of a rival *amator*; now the landscape itself tempts her. The shoreline is again implicated in Cynthia's betrayal of Propertius. So just as Cynthia is for Propertius the *domus* that offers him mental calm and contentment in love, Baiae's coastline is itself personified as the rival lover. The poem ends with a curse – not one against the perceived rival but against the coastline itself, where it is the waters of Baiae that are a crime against love: *a pereant Baiae, crimen Amoris, aquae* (30).

The implication of the landscape in Cynthia's alleged infidelities only further emphasizes Propertius' anxieties; it becomes an expression of his fears. Water flowing from the East helps make Baiae more remote, and stands as a physical manifestation of temptation, unease, and the unknown. The water is *inimica* and a *crimen*: it is not the people of Baiae and the businesses carried on there that receive these descriptions. At the same time, Cynthia is removed from the relative urban safety of Rome and her household. Yet she is the personification of Propertius' domestic fantasies: she *is* his *domus*. Where Propertius' anxieties leave him uncertain and fearful of what may be happening, it is the landscape which articulates these anxieties.

Baiae appears again in 3.18, which is Propertius' *epicedion* to Marcellus, Augustus' adoptive heir, whose death in 23 BC was mourned by many. Largely overshadowed by Vergil's tribute to Marcellus in Book 6 of the *Aeneid* (from line 861), it is nevertheless another of Propertius' elegies that clearly demonstrates the importance of descriptive setting, which in this case leads the reader to make one assumption, only to find out that he or she has been misled. The opening lines set the scene at Baiae in a way that immediately recalls the dramatic setting of *Elegy* 1.11 in the *Monobiblos*: *at nunc, inuisae magno cum crimine Baiae* (3.18.7) recalls *a pereant Baiae, crimen Amoris, aquae* (1.11.30). It seems as if 3.18 will pick up from where 1.11 left off, before twisting away from the erotic and into a lament for Marcellus. The dramatic setting in this case deceives the reader, masking the true thrust of the elegy, which is not revealed until false assumptions have been made. We will see the same strategy at play with Propertius 1.8A and 1.8B, where the reader 'buys into' Propertius' presentation of events in one, and then in the other realises that he or she has been led astray because of this. In each case, the anxiety of isolation and travel

into the ‘wilderness’ is emphasized, and comes close not only to overwhelming the characters within the poem, but also to misleading the poet and his readership.

### *Setting the scene*

As we have seen in Propertius 1.11, the poet’s desire to control or enclose wildness and expanse relies heavily on first evoking a setting that suggests expanse and exotic temptation, and secondly exploiting the differences in description between the dangers of wide, open spaces, and the safety of more controlled, defined space. Setting is therefore very important in achieving the poet’s desired effect. This section explores the compositional elements both Propertius and Tibullus bring to their descriptions of setting, particularly where a narrative scene is to take place. Propertius’ vividly imagined version of the Hylas story is an example of meticulous landscape composition in itself, as well as a companion to Roman landscape painting. Propertius includes enough detail for the reader to construct for his mind’s eye a visual representation of the dramatic setting, thereby achieving *enargeia*. We find there to be a number of Pompeian frescoes that depict the rape of Hylas in a remarkably similar fashion to Propertius, especially in composition. Both painting and poetry are then related to Hellenistic literary descriptions and artistic representations of the same scene. Yet again, we find some striking concordances. I argue that the reader would also have been greatly assisted by knowledge of contemporary Roman landscape paintings of the same scene, which express visually what Propertius evokes verbally, as well as being well-versed in Hellenistic versions of the same story. The accord between poetry and painting suggests a certain amount of interplay between the two art forms, one which may be representative of direct influence, or may reflect a shared aesthetic interest.

Tibullus also displays an interest in pictorialism, but in a different way from Propertius. In another example of setting for a narrative scene, namely the fantasy of rural bliss in 1.5, we find that Tibullus has an eye for detail that matches closely the renowned but for us relatively obscure landscape painter Studius. Tibullus’ countryside, which forms the dramatic setting for an imagined domestic vignette, is an intriguing mixture of realism and nostalgia, often rendered in a pictorial way. 1.5 is

an interesting variant on the *comos* and *paraclausithyron*,<sup>48</sup> and contains a very descriptive passage about his (idealised) fantasy of Delia as the rural *matrona* and *domina*. The landscape lacks the meticulous composition that we see in Propertius; instead, Tibullus relies on reader supplementation to complete his rural retreat, a technique that does not defeat the importance of landscape, but rather engages the reader's interest in it in a different and striking way.

When Propertius retells the Hylas myth as a warning for a love-struck Gallus he recreates a similarly isolated setting. Influenced by existing versions of the myth, most notably by Theocritus (*Idyll* 13) and Apollonius of Rhodes (*Arg.* 1.1207-1272), Hylas is a solitary figure (*unus* *Hylas ibat Hamadryasin*; Prop. 1.20.32)<sup>49</sup> in a landscape described in an unerringly detailed fashion, from the peak of Mount Arganthus to the fountain of Pegae to the nymphs' own wellspring home (33-34). Framed by the mountains and the deliciously ripe apple orchard, the small, vulnerable figure of Hylas among the red and white lilies is reflected by the pool that also conceals the nymphs who will seal his fate. The setting, while beautiful – and beautifully detailed – makes for a delicate, yet isolated, enclave. Only when Propertius has established this location do the nymphs – the other 'living' things – appear. In setting the lone figure of Hylas in such a detailed, but deserted, *locus amoenus*, the landscape itself, and the organic sense of wilderness that stems from it, is palpable.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, his linking of Hylas' isolated, eerie landscape to the sacred rivers in Umbrian forests (7),<sup>51</sup> brings the mythological landscape into the local geography of the Roman provincial countryside, an appropriate importation given 1.20's purpose as a warning to Gallus. Propertius' description *duros montes et frigida saxa* (13) sets the tone of both landscapes, the real and the mythological. And Hercules' fate, to weep by *indomito...Ascanio* could well become Gallus' (16).

<sup>48</sup> On these terms, see Cairns 1972: 6.

<sup>49</sup> I adopt the reading offered by Heyworth 2007: 90-91, substituting *unus* for the first *ibat* which appears in MSS NATTC and S after the scribe noted some problem with one of the *ibats*. Numerous editors and scholars have suggested alternate readings to this tricky line, most of which seek to emphasize Hylas' isolation and separation from the other Argonauts, and, particularly, Heracles; for these, see Heyworth 2009: 90-91.

<sup>50</sup> The inherent danger of the beautiful setting, and its rich heritage in ancient literature, is remarked on by Segal 1974: 22-23.

<sup>51</sup> Propertius, with *sacra flumina*, may be echoing Theocritus 1.69 and 7.136, where Theocritus uses the expression ἱερὸν ὕδωρ, emphasizing the sacredness of water, which is the home of various gods and other spirits. He may equally be alluding to Apollonius of Rhodes' evocation of sacred springs at *Arg.* 1.1208, discussed below, p. 31.

This calls to mind the movement of Roman landscape painters during the time of Augustus. Whereas Greek landscape painting had almost always focused on the role of the characters depicted,<sup>52</sup> Roman landscape painting instead began to experiment with a composition that reflected more on the sense and feeling imparted by natural features. Dawson's study of Romano-Campanian mythological landscape paintings identifies an indigenous Italian genesis for such painting.<sup>53</sup> Pompeian wall paintings of the Third Style depicting the rape of Hylas,<sup>54</sup> for example, use space and scale to impart upon the viewer 'an eerie impression'.<sup>55</sup> By setting Hylas and the nymphs as small, albeit detailed, figures against a mountainous and foreboding background, the painting creates a very real sense of isolation,<sup>56</sup> with the scale suggesting that Hylas is in a place uncontrolled by man; he himself is open and isolated. Although nymphs surround Hylas, he is the only mortal human present. The colouring is described by Ling as '[g]hostly', with dark blue mountains with purple-brown shadows; the marshland in the foreground is a bluish-brown.<sup>57</sup> This dull, earthy palette makes Hylas himself more conspicuously out of place, surrounded as he is by the nymphs who are draped in white. And although it is probable that a Greek original formed the basis of these two paintings, the choice to set Hylas and the nymphs in such a grandly-proportioned landscape (making the figures very small) represented the unique twist of the Roman painter.<sup>58</sup> Propertius' interest in 1.20 in the compositional aspects of its setting could therefore have drawn inspiration from contemporary painting. This brings us to a central issue in this thesis, namely the interrelationship of art and poetry, and the aesthetic inspiration each might have drawn from the other. It is clear that Propertius' compositional arrangement in his Hylas poem suggests a landscape painting as inspiration just as much as existing literary models such as those in Theocritus and Apollonius.

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<sup>52</sup> Schefold 1960: 87 evidences the Rape of Hippodameia as depicted by the Meidias Painter; see Swindler 1929: fig. 342, *LIMC* 5.2 'Hippodameia I': il. 23; see also the Rape of Persephone at Vergina, Tomb I, north fresco, *LIMC* 4.2 'Hades': il.104. Dawson 1965: 48 notes that, 'despite a definite decrease in the emphasis on man to the exclusion of his surroundings and a definite increase in interest in the world of nature [in Hellenistic painting], the representation of landscape for its own sake is not to be found before the first century BC'.

<sup>53</sup> Dawson 1965: 79.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Pompeii, IX.7.16 (*LIMC* 4.2 'Hylas': il. 7).

<sup>55</sup> Schefold 1960: 87.

<sup>56</sup> Ling 1979: 787.

<sup>57</sup> Ling 1979: 776.

<sup>58</sup> Ling 1979: 787.



Hellenistic poets have also been shown to be in step with contemporary landscape painters. Zanker identifies such a phenomenon in the pseudo-Theocritean *Heracles Leontophonus* (*Id.* 25).<sup>59</sup> A farmhand gives Heracles a description of Augeas' farming estate (7-12) before providing even greater detail on the nearby stables (13-26). The farmhand offers a lot of spatial information to Heracles and the reader, who becomes an additional, silent companion. Zanker includes in his analysis the scene-change from the farm's limits to the stables through the use of ὧδε ('this way'; 14) and a number of spatial guides, 'to your right' (18), 'across the river' (19), 'over there' (20), 'immediately beside' (23).<sup>60</sup> The farmhand also includes valuable information on the fertility of the land (13-14, 16-17, 20-21) and the size or position of other features (the big lake by the River Menius at line 15 and the obviously visible stables by the flowing Menius at line 19).<sup>61</sup> Zanker sums up the overall effect of these descriptions, calling it 'a "verbal painting"'.<sup>62</sup> The reader has been encouraged to visualise the setting, which includes all the compositional elements he might have been able to identify in a contemporary landscape painting. The result is a poem that engages with a narrative (the story of Heracles and the stables of Augeas) in a vivid, visual manner, letting the 'verbal painting' tell the tale through an analogy with art, rather than spelling it out with words. Propertius' description of the isolate wellspring in 1.20 has a similar effect in mind; the reader uses his knowledge of landscape art to paint his or her own mental picture. This example of a poet relying on contemporary developments in visual art can be linked back to the Hellenistic *Heracles Leontophonus*, further emphasizing the shared interest in visualisation and description.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Zanker 1996.

<sup>60</sup> Zanker 1996: 414.

<sup>61</sup> Zanker 1996: 414-415.

<sup>62</sup> Zanker 1996: 415.

<sup>63</sup> Another shared interest is the allusion to another narrative that is achieved by the verbal painting. Zanker 1996: 416 notes that the Labour of cleaning the stables in the main narrative in *Id.* 25, while omitted from the main narrative, is effectively told through supplementation that arises from the Farmhand's description of the farm. The mention of the River Menius, which Heracles diverts to wash out the Augean stables, is part of the verbal painting. The reader knows this and can use the pictorial description as a springboard from which he or she can add his or her own version of the Labour. Propertius achieves similar effect in 1.20. His narrative covers the rape of Hylas, itself a warning to Gallus about the dangers of falling in love with someone with the dangerous combination of being both carefree and beautiful. The other narrative is that of Jason and the Argonauts. While we linger on the scene, we are forced to contemplate why Hylas was here in the first place. Propertius does tell us that Hylas' purpose was to fetch water for Heracles, and although the tone is erotic, the reader can nonetheless supplement the wider tale of the Argonauts.

Like 1.11, where water is associated with the capacity of Baiae to lead chaste girls astray, the pool of water in 1.20 plays a significant role in Hylas' fate. In most accounts, Hylas makes his way to the pool to fetch water for Hercules (as in Apollonius). Extant Roman landscape paintings present the same story.<sup>64</sup> Propertius, however, omits any reference to Hylas carrying a jug, although it is stated earlier that Hylas became separated from the other Argonauts to find water: *quaerere fontis aquam* (24). The allusion to Apollonius' *Argonautica* is apparent (δίζητο κρήνης ἱερὸν ῥόον; 1.1208), notwithstanding the omission of the bronze jug.<sup>65</sup> In Propertius, instead of bending down to scoop up water in the jug, Hylas is, like Narcissus,<sup>66</sup> struck by his own reflection, and lingers too long gazing into the pool, before reaching out with both hands, propped up on his shoulder, to drink (1.20.43-44).<sup>67</sup> This gives the nymphs enough time to grab him and draw him under. This is quite a remarkable twist. We shall discuss viewing and gaze in greater detail in Chapter II, but the act of gazing and of reflection is so intimately tied to the landscape that it calls for treatment here. It is the pool, a feature of the natural landscape, that facilitates Hylas' capture as he gazes on his own reflection in the water: the nymphs have enough time to effect his 'capture'.<sup>68</sup> The clear water is also, perhaps, complicit in Hylas' fate, being still and reflective enough that he could be ensnared by his own visage (we may compare the complicity of the water in 1.11). Propertius' portrayal of the Hylas myth incorporates similar stylistic attributes to the contemporary landscape paintings depicting the same scene, particularly the Pompeiian wall-painting we have already mentioned. While no direct links may be found between these similar expressions of the landscape in the Hylas myth, there seems to be a sort of aesthetic concordance between these depictions. Hylas is at the centre of the setting, but is framed, if not dwarfed, by the isolation of the disarmingly pretty and vividly detailed *locus amoenus*. However

<sup>64</sup> Ling 1979 has compiled an excellent review of extant Pompeian paintings that depict Hylas.

<sup>65</sup> Hollis 2006: 109 suggests that the bronze jug alludes to a version of the Hylas story by Alexander of Aetolia (fr. 3.22 Powell, Magnelli).

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Narcissus' reflected face, as depicted on a Pompeian wall-painting: Pompeii V.4.11(i) (Domus Lucretii Frontonis), *LIMC* 6.2 'Narkissos': il. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Again, the position of Hylas is similar to the description offered by Apollonius at *Arg.* 1.1234-1235: ἔρεισεν / λέχρις.

<sup>68</sup> The interest in reflections and self-image is not a new one (cf. the story of Narcissus). However, Hellenistic literary and artistic interests can be detected here more than the Narcissus story. There are a number of examples in Hellenistic art of subjects being captivated by their own image. Similarly, mirrors feature prominently in Callimachus' fifth *Hymn*. Athena does not require a mirror, but Venus spends a considerable time altering her hair in front of a mirror of polished bronze. See further Zanker 2004: 55-60.

beautifully pictorial the landscape setting may be, and however intimately framed the pool is, the warning to Gallus is clear: such remote places can lead a lover astray.

Tibullus prefers a few fields (famously, *parua seges satis est*; 1.1.43) and a limited interaction with the public life of Rome. Adjectives like *paruus* describe his ideal agricultural enterprise – a small paddock, far removed from the pressures of a busy life. Such a setting can also be found in any number of Hellenistic precursors, where the pastoral enclave and the *simplicitas* and *paupertas* of rural lifestyle were a major part of the literary scene. In their depictions of the everyday figure to traditionally heroic ones, the Hellenistic poets helped begin the serious study of more humble characters, something to which we shall return later. It should come as no surprise that Tibullus populates his landscape with detailed descriptions common to everyday settings. When we consider that Tibullus' rural fantasy is an alternative home, away from the public duties and difficulties of his urban life, these small details stand out as both engaging and hopeful, albeit rooted in a nostalgic and wishful yearning for the imagined simplicity of an earlier age. His interest in rural lifestyle also befits a poet for whom *tener* and *paruus* are among his favourite adjectives: the small-scale life of the farmer is an attractive alternative to the entanglements of fickle urban love, although Tibullus himself is never really able to leave his woman or the city.

In *Elegy* 1.5, Tibullus, rejected and dejected, bewails his separation from Delia at her doorstep, where he is locked out, not by Delia but by the *lena*, who has no desire to allow the impoverished Tibullus back into Delia's life. In characteristically Tibullan style, a major part of the poem (19-36) involves a daydream, completely removed from the dramatic setting. Tibullus dreams of a life with Delia in the country, where together they play out the roles of small-time farmer and farmer's wife, maintaining a humble but happy household. In a key statement, Tibullus says of this, *haec mihi fingebam* (35), emphasizing the fantastic nature of his daydream. However, this does not detract in any way from the vividness of Tibullus' picture. In many ways, it is an almost self-conscious reference to the highly skilled creativity Tibullus brings to his work. Murgatroyd notes that this fantasy is 'full of detail and liveliness';<sup>69</sup> it is a striking example of crafting a truly 'living' scene, where the detailing of the country setting links with the charming personal descriptions.

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<sup>69</sup> Murgatroyd 1991: 167.

at mihi felicem uitam, si salua fuisses,	19	
fingebam demens, sed renuente deo.	20	
rura colam, frugumque aderit mea Delia custos,		
area dum messes sole calente teret,		
aut mihi seruabit plenis in lintribus uuas		
pressaue ueloci candida musta pede.		
consuescet numerare pecus; consuescet amantis	25	
garrulus in dominae ludere uerna sinu.		
illa deo sciet agricolae pro uitibus uuam,		
pro segete spicas, pro grege ferre dapem.		
illa regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae:		
at iuuat in tota me nihil esse domo.	30	
huc ueniat Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma		
Delia selectis detrahat arboribus:		
et, tantum uenerata uirum, hunc sedula curet,		
huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.		
haec mihi fingebam, quae nunc Eurusque Notusque	35	
iactat odoratos uota per Armenios.	36	(Tib. 1.5.19-36)

I, fool, dreamed that the good life was for me, if you were well, but the god denied me. I'll farm, and with me would be Delia, guarding the grain, while the ground, warmed by the sun, threshes the harvested crops. Or, she will supervise the grapes in the full vats, and the gleaming first pressing, squashed by swift feet. She'll get used to totting up the flock; the babbling slave's child will get used to playing in the lap of his loving mistress. She will know to give to the Farmer God [Silvanus] grapes in thanks for the vines, ears of corn in thanks for crop, and an offering for the flock. Let her rule everyone, let everything be in her care: but let it please me that I have no significance in the whole house. My Messalla would come here, for him Delia would pluck sweet apples from choice trees: and, in honour of such a great man, she would take good care of him, prepare a feast for him and she herself would wait on him. I made these dreams for myself, which now the East and South winds scatter beyond fragrant Armenia.

The dream itself is consciously framed by the verb *fingebam*. This, as noted, gives a level of self-awareness to this fantasy, but it does not detract from the *descriptio* within.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, as we have seen already, fantasy and the ability to *see* something that is described is an essential strategy of successful elegiac poetry. In many ways,

<sup>70</sup> Miller 1999: 187: the scene 'is admitted to be a fantasy, and yet it is one of the most powerful and lasting images of the poem'.

this passage functions as a rubric for *enargeia* in elegy. Great care has been taken to render accurate and vivid descriptions, capturing the motion and tone of Tibullus' fantasy. Tibullus lingers on the 'ordinary': the pressing of grapes (24), and the careful selection of choice apples (31). Delia, convincingly cast as the loyal farmer's wife, will carry out her appointed tasks (21-25). Another picture, of the young slave child playing in Delia's lap (25-26), involves cleverly combining visual and aural references (*ludere* and *garrulus*). The rural fantasy is punctuated throughout by the use of words that run the gamut of agricultural and pastoral action: *custos*, *numerare*, *ludere*, *sciet*, *regat*, *iuuet*, *detrahat*, *curet*. This sort of focus on what is almost a still-life snapshot presents a very pictorial image for the reader. And although it is a fantasy, the fact that it is picturable makes it conceivable in the reader's mind, and therefore within the realm of the feasible.

Just as landscape paintings decorated the walls of urban households, so Tibullus' evocation of the pastoral setting in his dreamlike fantasies provide fertile ground for his complicated, elegant, and detailed themes. Von Blanckenhagen's accounts of the Augustan villa at Boscotrecase and the artworks found there during its excavation bear striking similarities with the settings so carefully cultivated and described by Propertius and Tibullus. In particular, the series of vignettes found the Black Room depict bucolic vignettes in sacro-idyllic settings, some in a manner similar to the Tibullan fantasies of 1.5. In particular, the east wall's landscape vignette depicting a shrine and surrounding worshipers is similar to Tibullus' careful attention to the small details of such a sacrifice.<sup>71</sup> The setting is undoubtedly pastoral: a central shrine and tree dominate the composition. Like the other paintings in the Black Room, it is painted onto the black wall background; there is no realistic backdrop or perspective employed, although the figures themselves are foreshortened and the detailing is precise enough to convey meaningful activity. The viewer focuses entirely on the foreground action of those around the shrine. The figures appear to be simple country folk; von Blanckenhagen suggests a woman bending down to deposit a gift, a child carrying a vase, and a shepherd driving a sheep. A statue of a goddess or

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<sup>71</sup> Boscotrecase Villa, Black Room (15), east wall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Inv. 20.192.10 (von Blanckenhagen 1990: pl. 13).

another woman is also present, though difficult to discern.<sup>72</sup> The room's two other landscape vignettes represent similar scenes.<sup>73</sup>

The lack of a realistic background creates an interesting, stylised effect to what is otherwise a detailed composition. This presented something of a problem to von Blanckenhagen: how to reconcile the detailed, vivid depiction of ordinary, everyday people venerating a shrine with the complete lack of a 'big' picture? His response is remarkably close to analyses of Tibullus' dreamlike style of poetry, where subjects which are in themselves highly pictorial are merely figments of his wishful imagination.<sup>74</sup>

With their brilliant highlights and their sketchily applied colours, the sacred landscapes emerge like jewels from the dark expanse that surrounds them, each a rich little island glittering in the vastness of a dark sea, seen in a far distance and as if in a dream, a clear, detailed mirage.

Take for example the dreamy escape of Tibullus 1.5. The rural escape Tibullus imagines while he waits for the chance to see Delia is an impossible dream. But this does not prevent Tibullus' setting and the actions within displaying *enargeia*: the reader can place him- or herself in the dream world Tibullus creates. It, too, is a clear, detailed mirage.

Both the paintings at Boscotrecase and Tibullus' dreamlike escape of 1.5 could be viewed in the light of viewer or reader supplementation, where the background would be supplied to 'complete' the image. The viewer would 'paint' his or her own images, presumably based on personal experience of the countryside, on to the black background of the Boscotrecase wall paintings. Tibullus' nostalgic but detailed rural fantasy is constructed along similar lines. The reader is presented with information about rural activities and a rustic cottage, but must construct much of the background himself. This invitation to the reader to supply what is an essential aspect of the passage is an effective way of allowing the reader to buy into the fantasy Tibullus creates.

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<sup>72</sup> Von Blanckenhagen 1990: 11.

<sup>73</sup> Boscotrecase Villa, Black Room (15), north wall, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 20.192.10 (von Blanckenhagen 1990: pl. 1); Boscotrecase Villa, Black Room (15), west wall, Naples (lost).

<sup>74</sup> Von Blanckenhagen 1990: 12.

A passage from Pliny the Elder describes the ‘famous enigmatic’<sup>75</sup> figure of Studius, hailed here as an innovator in Augustan landscape painting:

Non fraudando et Studio diui Augusti aetate, qui primus instituit amoenissimam parietum picturam, uillas et porticus<sup>76</sup> ac topiaria opera, lucos, nemora, colles, piscinas, euripos, amnes, litora, qualia quis optaret, uarias ibi obambulantium species aut nauigantium terraque uillas adeuntium asellis aut vehiculis, iam piscantes, aucupantes aut uenantes aut etiam uindemiantes. Sunt in eius exemplaribus nobiles palustri accessu uillae, succollatis sponsione mulieribus labantes trepidis quae feruntur, plurimae praeterea tales argutiae facetissimi salis.

(Pliny the Elder, *NH* 35.37.116-117)

And Studius, of the age of Emperor Augustus, should not be ignored; it was he who first instituted the most beautiful wall-paintings, of villas and porches, and topiaries, copses, groves, hills, ponds, canals, rivers, seashores, and such things one might want. There were different sorts of people wandering or sailing, and coming to their villas, on donkeys or in carriages. Then too there were those fishing, bird-stalking or hunting, and even harvesting the vintage. In many examples of his painting there were classy villas with accessways across the marshes, men slipping with anxious women on their shoulders, whom they carry for a bet, and so many more of the lively and most witty things besides.

Of particular interest to this study is the catalogue of depictions Pliny attributes to Studius. What we see in Tibullan and Propertian poetry, namely vivid description of people in sweeping landscapes, appears in Pliny’s description of Studius’ compositions. Just as Tibullus’ countryside life is full of community gatherings, religious rites, and charming domestic details, so too were Studius’ paintings. In particular, the description of figures fishing, bird-stalking, hunting, and gathering grapes for the vintage all relate to activities performed in a dramatic setting, but still received a full and detailed depiction from Studius. Moreover, the verisimilitude of Studius’ rural landscapes could be verified by a viewer who had visited the countryside around Rome.

Tibullus’ ideal country lifestyle incorporates similar small details, in a setting that is prescribed, simple, and traditional. We recall the counting of sheep, pressing of grapes and playing with children in 1.5. In this way, Tibullus’ aim of smallness applies as much to those who people his dramatic settings as to his ideal agricultural

<sup>75</sup> Von Blanckenhagen 1990: 48, n. 111.

<sup>76</sup> Ling 1977: 1 suggests reading this as *portus*.

lifestyle. This is an idea that occurs throughout Tibullus' poetry. For example, in 2.1 the celebration of rural industry that accompanies the festival he describes reflects a similar focus on the ordinary, mentioning gardening, winemaking, harvesting, and ploughing (43-52). Like Studius, Tibullus has incorporated into his dramatic setting – a rural festival – other, detailed aspects of rural life. In this way, he is able to maintain a sense of intimacy as he details the sort of lifestyle rustic Romans had led for generations, but also to stick to his setting, with the emphasis on the detailing.

Of course, this is but a dream: the real-life setting of 1.5 is outside a locked door. This neatly contrasts the ideas of home and away: Tibullus' position outside the door, so consciously fantasised away by his dream of rustic happiness, leaves him both separated from his lover (who is inside) and his ideal home (about which he can only dream). In fact, he might as well be in the exotic East – such is his sense of separation, with line 36 introducing the remoteness of the exotic through reference to Armenia. The word *odoratos*, too, stands out, a strong and sensual word that allusively shifts the locked-out lover to another part of the world entirely, far removed from Tibullus' simple country cottage. Indeed, *odoratos* and the barrage of winds coming from the corners of the world bring with them hints of the exotic. Such references also impart a second sense of scale, where the humble cottage and secure, small farmlet is set against, and carried away by, a more sweeping sense of distance and space (35-36).

Moreover, when Messalla does come to the country, it appears that is just on a short visit (31), and, in any event, Delia handles the job of hostess (31-34). Scholars have tried to read many things into the arrival of Messalla into Tibullus' country fantasy. While it is clear that his patron's intrusion is problematic for Tibullus and his dream of rustic happiness, it could be seen as simply a device for bringing the dream back to earth. Miller's suggestion that Messalla's presence undermines Tibullus' own position in the fantasy (to the extent that 'Tibullus has already vanished') does not necessarily defeat the well crafted setting.<sup>77</sup> Tibullus' rural escape is described with such careful attention to visual detail; its vividness makes it easy for the reader to visualise.

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<sup>77</sup> Miller 1999: 219.



### *Dangerous journeys*

Pictorial realism in some of Propertius' elegies creates a setting so vivid that the reader can almost step directly into it. Charles Saylor has argued that 1.11 is 'an unusual integration of topography, feeling and style'.<sup>78</sup> While Saylor's analysis of 1.11 is detailed and arrives at conclusions that should brook little resistance, calling it 'unusual' is not the case. Rather, it is perhaps one of the more striking examples of a technique that is found across many elegies, where descriptions of landscape and setting are essential to completing our perception of the poem. In this way, too, it must be noted that pictorial description and careful attention to space and scale are not *parerga* to the main thrust of such elegies; they are in fact integral. Propertius' and Tibullus' elegies abound with examples of this allegedly unusual integration. Propertius' approach to Cynthia's leaving in 1.8A, for example, could not succeed without audience involvement – integration – in the experience of the setting. In 1.8A, where the poet bewails Cynthia's journey to the east, the description is sensual and presents us with a clear indication of Propertius' ever-present anxieties, as he is at once concerned and hopeful that the chilling effect of hoarfrost on her toes will turn Cynthia back to him:

tu pedibus teneris positas calcare pruinas,  
tu potes insolitas, Cynthia, ferre niues?                      (Prop. 1.8A.7-8)

Can you handle walking on the fresh-laid frost with your slender feet, Cynthia, are you able to endure the unaccustomed snow?

He evokes a natural landscape that he hopes will retard Cynthia's progress, discourage her wanderings, or prevent them altogether. Here also, Propertius uses weather to great effect. Moving beyond the visual, Propertius' descriptions of the weather Cynthia may encounter during her travels suggest the pathetic fallacy. Cynthia's desire to travel is unwelcome news to Propertius; the bad weather will in turn be unwelcome to Cynthia. In the space of a few lines (2-9) Propertius sets a dramatic meteorological scene: we have *gelida Illyria*, the helplessness expressed in *uento quolibet ire uelis*. In particular, two descriptions are evocative of a personal

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<sup>78</sup> Saylor 1975: 126.

experience in a harsh landscape. *Tu pedibus teneris positas calcare pruinas...* (7) draws the reader into the scene, at once creating an image of a land cloaked in hard white hoarfrost, while at the same time requiring us, literally, to ‘step into’ Cynthia’s shoes and experience the harshness of the icy ground for ourselves. The effect is magnified by the careful alliteration, which in spite of the cases, links *tu* to *teneris*, and *pedibus* to *positas pruinas*. Similarly, the personification of the deep dark water is carefully constructed to bring the reader or listener into the scene:

tune audire potes uesani murmura ponti  
fortis et in dura naue iacere potes? (Prop. 1.8A.5-6)

Can you really listen bravely to the roaring of the furious sea and are you able to sleep on a hard deck?

We are again invited into the scene; Propertius asks whether Cynthia can handle the raging seas and withstand lying *in dura naue*, but in doing so offers to the reader the same question. *In dura naue* may well also be serving two purposes: the metonymy for ‘deck’ is apparent in *naue*; the other could be a transferred epithet. Cynthia is Propertius’ *dura puella* (2.1.78), and the ship, in taking her away from him, perhaps acquires a similar description. Earlier, Cynthia was *demens* (1.8A.1), although it is not made clear that the addressee of these insults and challenges is in fact Cynthia until verse 8: *tu potes insolitas, Cynthia, ferre niues?* In these examples, we find that Propertius does not confine himself merely to vivid visual description; rather he embraces a *tactile* vividness. Whereas much of his description is visual and pictorial (that is, producing *enargeia*), Propertius introduces the reader to an additional sensory experience in 1.8A. The combined effect of these appeals, first to sight and then to touch, ensures that the reader is immersed in the landscape.

In 1.8A, the reader is integrated through detailed, pictorial description into the emotional maelstrom that Propertius was enduring as Cynthia prepared to set sail. The reader’s emotions are further manipulated in 1.8B. Suddenly, he or she finds out that the vivid descriptions of the forthcoming journey’s hardships are in fact otiose: Cynthia will stay – *Hic erit: hic iurata manet* (1.8B.1). The statement of the scene as it was in 1.8A – the detailed scene which the reader ‘bought into’ – is thereby corrected in the following poem. Reader integration, the technique that I believe is at

play in the opening of 1.8A, is at the very least enhanced by the playful turn 1.8B, a response to 1.8A, undergoes. Convinced that Cynthia is leaving for a midwinter eastern frolic, we now find out that this is not the case at all. The vivid presentation of setting in 1.8A, where the reader is drawn into the landscape, is actually all a façade.

And when the poet himself is forced to endure a long journey, problems arise, too. Tibullus makes it clear in his programmatic first elegy that he willingly, happily, eschews the life of a soldier or a businessman in favour of that elegiac occupation, the *seruitium amoris* (1.1.1-2). Propertius and Tibullus set out in great detail their concerns about journeying. The great ocean is not a safe place for the elegist, literally and metaphorically. Apollo's advice to Propertius in 3.3 that he stick to writing erotic poetry in *libelli* (19) leads on to a rejection of open waters:

non est ingenii cumba grauanda tui.  
alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat harenas;  
tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est. (Prop. 3.3.22-24)

The little boat of your talent should not be overloaded. Let one of your oars graze the waves, the other the sand; you will be safe: in the middle of the ocean is the greatest swell.

Earlier we saw how Propertius used mythology and topography in 1.11 to illustrate the gap between Baiae's notoriety and its more heroic past. Similarly, 3.3 uses the contrast between the wide expanse of the ocean, where the storms rage, and the small-scale beachfront where his elegies are found. The depth of description cements this image into our minds, with the little boat rowing parallel to the shore, one side facing the open ocean, but the other hugging the shore. Safe, close, and careful, the boat and our elegist avoid being swept away by the turbulent waters of epic, while at the same time enjoying some of it. The image is a fitting metaphor for the generic mixing of elegy, one part heroic epic, the other something less grand. In this way, the elegiac propempticon and lover's journey are differentiated from earlier epic literature.<sup>79</sup> Central to this distinction is Propertius' use of spatial scale in his setting: the safety of the coastline is contrasted with the vastness and danger of the main. The level of pictorialism in doing this is also evident. Propertius' ocean-shore metaphor is not just

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<sup>79</sup> Propertius makes a similar distinction in 1.6, where, while Tullus braves the Adriatic sea and wages war in the East, Propertius, at Rome with Cynthia, battles with the temper of his mistress.

fulfilling a generic *recusatio*; it is developed sufficiently that it has its own *enargeia*. The image of the boat is scaled to the beach and the ocean, and it is also detailed enough to present a picturable image.

While others may embark on a life of fortune (Tib. 1.1.1-4), Tibullus is careful to downscale his own ambitions, abjuring long journeys (*nec semper longae deditus esse viae*; 26) and seeking for himself only the smallest share of wealth: *parua seges satis est* (43). Tibullus' journey poems display similar qualities to what we have found in Propertius. For the elegiac lover, distance and separation are problematic, and symptomatic of something, usually a duty to a patron, getting in between him and his beloved. In 1.3, for example, the possibilities and dangers of 'international' travel swirl around Tibullus, who is left alone, ill, and mistrustful of his place of convalescence, Corcyra, which he refers to as Phaeacia:<sup>80</sup>

me tenet ignotis aegrum Phaeacia terris:  
 abstineas auidas Mors modo nigra manus.  
 abstineas, Mors atra, precor... (Tib. 1.3.3-5)

Phaeacia, land of the unknown, holds unwell me: may black Death hold back her grasping hands. Hold back, dark Death, I pray...

Tibullus' displeasure at being stranded on Corcyra is apparent from the first few lines. So Phaeacia (*ignotis...terris*) is followed by *Mors* (twice, in lines 4 and 5), which is in turn given described as *nigra* and then *atra*; Tibullus' fear is that he will die alone in some foreign land. Beyond their obviously visual meanings, *atra* and *nigra* are loaded words with their pejorative connotations, especially *atra*. And even in the following lines the reference to Assyrian perfumes (*Assyrios...odores*; 7)<sup>81</sup> – although indicative of luxury befitting Delia<sup>82</sup> – reinforces the fact that Tibullus is left alone across the seas, reminding us of the setting of Tibullus' lament.

The role of Phaeacia and its links with the ensuing descriptions of life after death and the 'underworld' deserve special mention. An excellent discussion of the

<sup>80</sup> The use of Phaeacia instead of Corcyra for the island's name alludes to the *Odyssey*, further emphasizing Tibullus' separation from the home through the implied comparison to Odysseus' wanderings.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Tib. 1.5.36 and the effect of *Armenii odorati*. See above, p. 37.

<sup>82</sup> Murgatroyd 1994: 104.

allusive qualities of Phaeacia has already been undertaken by Donald Mills.<sup>83</sup> The relationship between the *Odyssey* and Tibullus' stranding in Corcyra, Mills argues, reinforces Tibullus' estrangement from Delia and his usual companions, as Phaeacia is 'a place remote from, and therefore unknown to, the rest of the world'.<sup>84</sup> This in turn allows Tibullus to move into the remaining two-thirds of 1.3, which contemplate the Golden Age and the afterlife. Structurally, then, the poem relies heavily on careful scene-setting, something which must emphasize the idea of being away from home in order to make a successful transition from physical absence to actual death. Phaeacia is an isolated setting: Tibullus must describe a setting that alienates his physical, mortal life from where he most wants to be – back in Rome, back with Delia, under the patronage of Messalla. Phaeacia is necessarily aloof from the rest of Tibullus' world, and in this way seeds the idea of separation through setting. This idea is then developed as Tibullus describes how little piety helps one in trouble, contrasting his position with the Golden Age (21-52), and then moving on, via a mock epitaph (53-56), to a description of the underworld (57-90). By means of clever transitions that rely on similarities between the landscapes of the three movements, Tibullus is able to explore his themes of isolation and separation.

The Golden Age is described after Tibullus rails against his contemporaries' devotion to unhelpful and uncaring deities, not to mention the ambivalence of omens (11-34).<sup>85</sup> Honey, a common topic in pastoral poetry,<sup>86</sup> oozes from trees (45), and fields lack borders (43-44); agricultural and pastoral production is automatic and bounteous.<sup>87</sup> Tibullus' detailed, allusive descriptions colour the landscape, and provide an interesting comparison with his description of Phaeacia. Again, Mills has detailed the interplay between Tibullus' Phaeacia, Tibullus' rendering of the Golden

<sup>83</sup> Mills 1974.

<sup>84</sup> Mills 1974: 226.

<sup>85</sup> Mills 1974: 227-228.

<sup>86</sup> Vergil's fourth *Georgic* on apiculture is a suitable example from Tibullus' immediate past.

<sup>87</sup> Comparisons abound for this passage. Hesiod's *Works and Days* (vv. 110-200) describes the Golden Age, noting that the earth gave forth all kinds of produce without need for cultivation, and that flocks were large:

...καρπὸν	δ'	ἔφερε	ζεῖδωρος	ἄρουρα
αὐτομάτη	πολλόν	τε	ἄφθονον·	οἱ δ' ἐβελημοὶ
ἦσυχαι	ἔργ'	ἐνέμοντο	σὺν ἐσθλοῖσιν	πολέεσσιν.
ἄφνειοὶ μῆλοισι, φίλοι μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν.			(Hes. <i>WD</i> 117-120)	

...for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods. (trans. Evelyn-White)

Age, and Homer's similar (but not by any means identical) treatment of Phaeacia in the *Odyssey*.<sup>88</sup> So the remote isolation of Phaeacia, which stands in for Tibullus' own sense of separation, links it with the long-gone Golden Age, whose splendid isolation and abundance dovetails with the previous descriptions. The intensity of the pictorial detail in turn helps the reader adjust his or her gaze, shifting on to the next movement of the poem. The final phase, that of the underworld, is subtly brought into view through the landscape as well. No stone marks out the borders of fields in the Golden Age (43-44). For the boundary stone, Tibullus uses *lapis*. Ten lines later, *lapis* returns, this time not as a natural feature of the landscape, but to describe Tibullus' imagined gravestone: *fac lapis inscriptis stet super ossa notis...* (54). Further emphasizing the links between all three sections, the epitaph (55-56) joins together the journey, the landscape, and the contrast between Tibullus' day and the Golden Age. Tibullus is taken by *Mors*, having followed his patron across land and sea. Such a journey could never have occurred during the Golden Age, which, according to Tibullus, lacked any form of seafaring (36-37).<sup>89</sup>

Tibullus' description of the underworld is replete with highly pictorial detail. The Elysian Fields, Tibullus' imagined resting place (57-58) are described as an idealised pastoral setting. The fields are untilled (*non culta*; 61) and everywhere is covered in roses (61-62). The exotic beauty of these surroundings allows Cupid free reign with his arrows (63-64). When it comes to Tartarus, Tibullus paints a different picture. Using landscape features, he creates an altogether less enticing image, beginning with a fearful description of darkness and roiling rivers:<sup>90</sup>

at scelerata iacet sedes in nocte profunda  
abditā, quam circum flumina nigra sonant... (Tib. 1.3.67-68)

But hidden in deep night the wicked place lies, around which black rivers roar...

<sup>88</sup> Mills 1974: 229.

<sup>89</sup> The origins of seafaring receive different treatments by different poets. Hesiod considers it to be the last resort of the desperate farmer (*WD* 618-623). Catullus opens *Carmen* 64 with a description of Pelian pines cutting through the water for the first time and astonishing the sea-nymphs (1-7). In the *Odyssey*, it is established that the Phaeacians, despite living in splendid isolation, were nonetheless excellent navigators (7.56-63). Apollonius of Rhodes includes detailed descriptions of the *Argo* and its journeying (see, for example, *Arg.* 1.559-579). Such descriptions extend to other ships, too, particularly when the Colchians chase the Argonauts up the Istros, the modern-day river Danube (*Arg.* 4.303-337). Returning to Catullus, the sailing of the *Argo* and its relationship to the 'first' ship of Pelian pines present some interesting uncertainties. See further O'Hara 2007: 35-38.

<sup>90</sup> Tibullus substantiates his own view in 1.10, where he states that there are neither fields nor vines (35).

The earlier references to the colour black (*atra* and *nigra*; 4-5) are picked up again: darkness (*nocte*) is a constant presence, and the *flumina* are filled with black water. The sensory experience is further enhanced by *sonant*. Companions to the landscape, Tisiphon, *niger* Cerberus, Ixion, Tityos, Tantalus and others (69-80) complete the catalogue of dark and dangerous associates of Tartarus. These descriptions of an unfriendly, inhospitable environment form the culmination of Tibullus' landscapes, and combine to present an increasingly negative view of isolation and separation.<sup>91</sup> Tibullus' descriptions, and his evocative and allusive presentation of setting contribute to the vivid and emotive atmosphere of 1.3. Subtle references to the exotic hint at exclusion; setting then reflects increasing isolation, and allows Tibullus to move the reader into darker places, which in turn link back into his earlier settings.

### ***Conclusion***

It is apparent that Propertius and Tibullus are interested in descriptive setting. Sometimes, as in Propertius 1.20, it is the setting itself that receives the lion's share of the elegy; the composition of the landscape is central to the poet's concerns. Minute details embellish the emotive pull or the seductive dangerousness of a *locus amoenus*. Sometimes, as in Tibullus 1.5, the fantasy vignette of a happy rural life relies on reader supplementation to provide much of the background setting, which is nonetheless a very important part of the poem. Propertius' warnings to Cynthia as she embarks on a journey to Illyria could equally be addressed to the reader, too. Direct questions help immerse the reader in the scene, as do the appeals to sight and other senses. Tibullus, stranded on Corcyra, uses the landscape and its connection first with Phaeacia in the *Odyssey* and then the Underworld to explore the sense of abandonment and futility of being stuck in an unsophisticated backwater. It is descriptions of the landscapes that link the various scenes and allow him to lead the reader through various settings; the poem's continuity and themes are brought into sharper focus with this understanding.

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<sup>91</sup> Mills 1974: 231.

We have seen that Propertius recreates settings with an eye for sensory detail, whether it be the colouring of the flowers in the Hylas' *locus amoenus* or the crisp, cold hoarfrost that presses against Cynthia's (and by association the readers') toes. *Enargeia* undoubtedly results from such vivid descriptions; I am also convinced that it was a conscious aim, in the model of Hellenistic poetry. Tibullus' *enargeia* is more subtle, but in crafting an intricately detailed and believable vignette in 1.5, one that is ultimately nothing but a fantasy, the reader is able to picture what is being described. The fact that Tibullus is effectively asking the reader to picture something which he himself is picturing in his mind (*haec mihi fingebam*) while he is in a completely different setting adds an interesting element to this. Both poets display descriptive qualities that enhance the believability of dramatic settings in a way that encourages the reader to visualise what is being described.



## II: Visualisation and the erotic gaze

### *Introduction*

*Oculi sunt in amore duces*, ‘the eyes are the leaders in love,’ says Propertius (2.15.12). It is to the eyes in particular that this chapter turns. Propertius and Tibullus follow in the footsteps of their Alexandrian predecessors when they explore the relationship between viewing and Amor. If our elegists are to be successful in their efforts to describe the erotic effects of Amor, then they must appeal to the reader’s senses and specifically sight. As we noted in the previous, which concerned vivid descriptions of settings and landscapes, Propertius and Tibullus raise pictorialism to an aim in itself. This chapter will be concerned with predominantly visual description within intimate contexts, in line with the ‘up close and personal’ theme.<sup>92</sup> Just as landscape painting proved an informative comparandum for setting, so sculpture in particular will help us place poetic personal descriptions within the broader artistic context. Two recurring terms require short explanations. Terms such as ‘intimate description’ and ‘erotic gaze’ refer generally to the sort of description examined in this chapter, with a focus on the vivid, visual and personal nature of such descriptions, particularly in situations where the act of seeing (or visualising) creates or enhances the erotic sense of a passage.

This chapter deals with examples of a wide range of intimate descriptions. First, a number of samples establish the importance of visual description as an aide for enhancing vivid descriptions that involve other senses, thereby presenting an even clearer picture in the mind’s eye of the reader. This is a key element of *enargeia*, which, in the Hellenistic tradition, is an aim of both Propertius and Tibullus. We then examine the recurring topos of naked Love – *nudus Amor*. We shall find that Propertius draws favourable comparisons between the inherent beauty of the natural world and the natural complexions and tones of the unmade-up woman. Because Amor goes naked, and the natural world is so beautiful, Cynthia – or any other woman, for that matter – looks best as she is, without artistry or cunning to beguile the viewer. At the same time, we find that colour and contrast are particularly

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<sup>92</sup> The Envoi will look forward to potential lines of enquiry relating to descriptions that emphasize the other senses.

important to Propertius; in these matters his debt to Hellenistic poets is especially pronounced.

The erotic gaze is the subject of the last part of the chapter. I draw attention to the significance of sight, seeing and being seen to the erotic undercurrent of Roman elegy. Both Propertius and Tibullus provide excellent examples of intimate description in an erotic context. I turn first to Propertius and examine a number of descriptions of Cynthia from his second book. These display both an interest in vivid visual detail as well as a fascination with the act of looking, whereby visual detail is deployed in a way that enhances the overall vividness of a larger descriptive passage. We discover that the erotic gaze of Propertius in particular has striking parallels with the sort of gaze outlined by Mulvey in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*;<sup>93</sup> her conclusions help sharpen our understanding of what effect Propertius produces with his intimate descriptions.

I then turn to Tibullus, whose own style of visual description has gone largely unnoticed, if not outright denied. I show that Tibullus does indeed cultivate his own type of erotic gaze, one that is most visible in the homoerotic elegies to the *eromenos* Marathus. It becomes apparent that Tibullus' style, despite sparing, judicious use of description and being very subtle in its allusions to Hellenistic predecessors, does indeed provide fertile ground for some interesting twists on the erotic gaze. Tibullus' role as *praeceptor amoris* is, for example, based on his understanding of visual cues to determine the success of a lover's courtship. We also find that Tibullus is as adept as Propertius in his placing of the reader in the position of spectator to an amorous encounter. All the while, his ability to manipulate the reader through deception adds another layer of sophistication to a number of common elegiac motifs.

### *Samples*

Before launching into detailed analysis, it is worthwhile considering several examples of the sort of techniques we shall explore, where visual description is deployed in a way that enhances the overall effect of a descriptive passage. *Elegy* 1.1, the

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<sup>93</sup> Mulvey 1975.

programmatic opener to the *Monobiblos*, begins on a personal note, with gaze firmly placed front and centre:

Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,  
 contactum nullis ante Cupidinibus.  
 tum mihi constantis deicit lumina fastus  
 et captus impositis pressit Amor pedibus... (Prop. 1.1.1-4)

Cynthia first caught wretched me with her eyes, touched before by no love. Then Amor cast down my proud gaze and with feet placed on my head pushed it down...

The importance of sight is apparent: Propertius' eyes are first to come under Cynthia's and Amor's control.

A more subtle example of sight's significance can be found in 1.5. We encountered this passage in the Introduction, where we noted that while not being particularly visual in its descriptions, it could still fit within ancient definitions of *enargeia*. In terms of the erotic gaze, we can re-examine part of the passage and find it just as rewarding in this context:

cum tibi singultu fortia uerba cadent,  
 et tremulus maestis orietur fletibus horror,  
 et timor informem ducet in ore notam...  
 ...  
 nec iam pallorem totiens mirabere nostrum,  
 aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego. (Prop. 1.5.14-16, 21-22)

When tough talk fails you, sobbing, and trembling dread rises with those fretful tears, and fear traces an ugly line across your face... Then you will not marvel at my all-over paleness, or why my whole body is so scrawny.

Propertius is explaining to Gallus the physical effects of lovesickness. There are a number of vivid sensory descriptions in this short passage: sobbing, bristling terror, the manifestation of fear's psychological effect on a man's face, pallor, and weight loss. Only v. 21 is, strictly speaking, visual in nature, with *pallorem* and *mirabere* evoking sight. But the combination of vivid descriptions here appeal to the mind's eye of the reader, enabling him or her to form a detailed picture. The contribution of

*mirabere* in particular to this cannot be overstated. Although speaking to Gallus, Propertius could just as well be addressing the reader. By using a verb of sight in this way, Propertius brings out the whole picture more vividly for the reader. This is technique that we shall find repeated often and to good effect.

In a similar vein, Tibullus' lament at the swift loss of youth consists of a series of pictorial descriptions, where the decline of physical beauty that accompanies age is compared to various natural phenomena:

at si tardus eris errabis; transiet aetas:	27	
quam cito non segnis stat remeatque dies.		
quam cito purpureos deperdit terra colores,		
quam cito formosas populus alta comas.	30	
quam iacet, infirmae uenere ubi fata senectae,		
qui prior Eleo est carcere missus equus.	32	
...		
formae non ullam fata dedere moram.	36	(Tib. 1.4.27-32, 36)

But if you're slow you'll make a mistake; age marches on: how quickly time stands not idle; it doesn't return. How quickly the earth loses its purple tones, how quickly the tall poplar its beautiful leaves. How the horse is cast aside when his fate comes with infirm old age, he who once flew out from the start-line of Elis... Fate does not give any reprieve for beauty.

Tibullus has not introduced a specific person or defined his exact subject, although we know from the wider context of the poem that it is young men, of whom Marathus in particular is the object of Tibullus' desire. Instead of merely noting the degenerative effects of old age, Tibullus dwells on the detail. He does this primarily through similes, which were noted by ancient literary critics as excellent tools for achieving *enargeia*.<sup>94</sup> This is surely the function of the similes *quam cito...colores* (29) and *quam cito...comas* (30); the effect of these two lines is to sharpen the vividness of the surrounding descriptions. Tibullus, then, deploys visual description in much the same way as Propertius.

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<sup>94</sup> See Webb 2009: 93.

### *Nudus Amor*

An important topos in Propertius is that of *nudus Amor*. Love goes naked, and a woman is most arousing to the male gaze when she displays a natural beauty rather than one comprised of make-up or some other artifice. Central to the *nudus Amor* topos is colour. When Propertius critiques the appearance of women, he does so through descriptions of colour. Dyes, brightly-coloured cloths, and cross-cultural fashions predominate in Propertius' catalogue of visual dos-and-don'ts. In ancient literature, colour had been long used to bring a description to life. Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles, for example, uses colour to vivify the figures Hephaestus has wrought (*Il.* 18.474-607). Death's clothing is stained red (535), Ares and Athena are golden (516), and the lions gulp down the black blood of an ox (583). But Propertius is clearly taking his inspiration from Hellenistic poetry, especially when he links colour with the erotic gaze. A particularly good illustration of the sort of passage that would have served as a model for Propertius is the rape of Hylas in the *Argonautica*, a scene that we have encountered earlier in Chapter I.<sup>95</sup> Hylas blushes in the moonlight (1.1230), which emphasizes his beauty.<sup>96</sup> Here, colour is linked with eroticism, serving as a sort of visual stimulus. If we take the same passage in Propertius (1.20.45), we find the same approach, although it is not Hylas that blushes but the nymphs, who are 'fired by his fairness', a neat inversion of the coloration described in Apollonius.

Propertius tells us elsewhere that he prefers a natural complexion. *Elegy* 1.2 serves as an ode to personal appearance *au naturel*. Women (Cynthia specifically) should not, for example, put up their hair or hide their figures behind silken drapery (1-2). Nor should a Roman adorn herself with foreign charms. It is here that *nudus Amor* first makes its appearance as a significant topos in Propertius' poetry: Love is naked, and rightly so (7). Comparanda from the natural world are adduced as evidence of this, and each is evoked in a way that concisely but effectively meets the criteria of *enargeia*. Unmolested, the earth produces its own colours, while the arbutus tree and the brook are most beautiful when human hands do not meddle (9-12). Beaches also receive an elegant pictorial brush-stroke, being described as painted with their native pebbles (13-14).

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<sup>95</sup> See above, p. 28.

<sup>96</sup> Zanker 2004: 87.

Propertius' mythical catalogue reminds the reader that no great fabled romance required make-up or jewellery (15-20). So, in the space of only a few couplets, Propertius manages to move the reader through pictorial description to mythological references and on to his message, that Cynthia give up the artificial and vain attempts to 'improve' her natural beauty. Such pictorial description is compressed but nevertheless sufficient to conjure up vivid mental images; the reader must picture the delights of natural splendour for the poem to have its desired effect. Its relationship with art, by its very nature artificial, is worthy of mention here, as things do not necessarily turn out as the reader might expect. We learn, suddenly, that the naked beauty of nature may not be so naked after all. Sharrock rightly identifies the 'shock' Propertius delivers at lines 21-22, when he introduces Apelles' paintings as exemplars of the sort of natural, unpainted look just ascribed to heroines of old.<sup>97</sup> It is, as she also notes, entirely explicable: Propertius uses Apelles' art as an example of 'natural-looking make-up',<sup>98</sup> combining the *nudus Amor* topos with an art-critical eye, something which later we shall identify as a hallmark of Propertius' visual descriptions. Sharrock suggests that Propertius is toying with the reader, and she argues that these 'unpainted ladies' with their natural beauty may in fact be painted, in the sense that they are paintings, or potential paintings of a master such as Apelles.<sup>99</sup> Propertius' sentiment is doing double duty: women should appear as nature intended, and painting should also strive to imitate nature, but this could mean nature as *painted* by Apelles. The complex 'nature as imitated by art which is in turn an imitation of art's rendering of nature' reading changes the reader's interpretation of the first descriptions: were they descriptions of nature, or descriptions of art depicting nature? Propertius has his cake and eats it too; Cynthia is not to paint herself with make-up, but Propertius paints her with words.<sup>100</sup>

I find Sharrock's conclusions compelling and, furthermore, they enhance the overtly pictorial treatment Propertius gives to natural and mythological phenomena, in a way that simultaneously allows for a self-referential critique of his own work and

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<sup>97</sup> Sharrock 1991: 39. Propertius must have in mind something like the Aphrodite Anadyomene. Pliny the Elder recounts the story of how Apelles fell in love with Alexander the Great's mistress Pancaste, who served as a nude model for the painter (*NH* 35.36.86). Pliny praises the quality of Apelles' Aphrodite Anadyomene, noting that it was consecrated by Augustus in the temple of Julius Caesar (35.36.91), making it even more likely that Propertius would be familiar with this work.

<sup>98</sup> Sharrock 1991: 39.

<sup>99</sup> Sharrock 1991: 39.

<sup>100</sup> Sharrock 1991: 40.

that of prominent ancient artists. ‘Nature’ is seen through art’s eyes after all. We can, then, identify two main approaches to Propertius’ take on the *nudus Amor* topos. First, he prizes the natural look in a sophisticated way. To borrow Ovid’s aphorism: *ars adeo latet arte sua* (*Met.* 10.252). Secondly, Propertius exploits the double standard of his instructions to Cynthia. On the one hand, he entreats her not to apply make-up and to take inspiration from natural and mythological exempla (something which we now know is a potentially disingenuous recommendation); on the other, he seems to suggest that a poet such as himself can engage in such artificial painting. The visual-verbal concordances throughout this clever deconstruction of the natural and the artificial only further enhance the sophisticated treatment of *nudus Amor*.

In 2.18, *nudus Amor* is again a prominent motif.<sup>101</sup> Our interest is in the fragmentary end to this elegy. Propertius returns to the *au naturel* attitude of 1.2, attacking artificial coloration of the skin (23-26, 31-32, 27-30).<sup>102</sup> It is hard not to be pictorial when discussing the make-up’s merits (or lack thereof), and Propertius’ images of women who colour face or hair with foreign ‘product’ refer to brilliant blues, while nature itself is perfect in its own form. Romans who dye their face or hair as Britons or Belgians are unnecessarily detracting from whatever natural beauty they possess (*turpis Romano Belgicus ore color*; 26). In 2.25, we move from fair to dark skin tones (41-42), from Greek to Roman, from simple dress to bright scarlet (45); each of these has its own charms. This catalogue of opposites is linked together through use of colour in the same manner as the Belgian and British references in 2.18. Moreover, it is the sight of these women which stirs up erotic desire. To drive this home, the anaphora of lines 41-44 focuses on the word *uidistis*. Furthermore, the visual contrasts are sharpened by Propertius’ use of colour, which creates an even stronger appeal to the reader to visualise the descriptions.

Book 3 contains a further interesting example of the *nudus Amor* topos:

Multa tuae, Sparte, miramur iura palaestrae,  
 sed mage uirginei tot bona gymnasii,  
 quod non infames exercet corpore ludos  
 inter luctantes nuda puella uiros... (Prop. 3.14.1-4)

<sup>101</sup> I adopt Heyworth’s order in his 2007 OCT edition. This differs significantly from the earlier OCT, Barber 1960, and that of Camps 1967. Heyworth does not separate 2.18 into three distinct elegies, choosing instead to maintain the overall unity and noting where the text does not follow.

<sup>102</sup> Heyworth’s 2007 order.

I marvel, Sparta, at the many customs of your arena, but especially all the benefits of the training of maidens, that a nude girl may without notoriety play at games among the wrestling men...

The professed aim of 3.14, where a Spartan woman exercises nude in the presence of men, is to praise a society where directness in love and certainty in relationships is highly valued. Women accompany their men, husbands have no cause to seek revenge, and courting is not prolonged by coquettishness (21-31). In 1.2 and 2.18, Propertius had criticised those women who dress themselves up in (often foreign) finery, masking whatever natural beauty there may be: *per te poteris formosa uideri* (2.18.29). In 3.14, Propertius expresses a similar sentiment:

nec Tyria uestes errantia lumina fallunt,  
est neque odoratae cura molesta comae. (Prop. 3.14.27-28)

Nor do Tyrian clothes deceive the wandering eyes, and there is no annoying concern for perfumed tresses.

The perspicuity that Propertius associates with nudity is indeed praiseworthy: a Spartan woman, in accordance with her nation's custom, is faithful (21-26). Roman women, by contrast, cover their bodies and faces, and their intentions (29-32). The *nudus Amor* (or here, '*nuda puella*') sentiment is repeated at the end of 3.14, when Propertius states that he would be more grateful to Rome if it adopted such practices as Sparta's. At the same time, however, the visual appeal (*miramur*) and the physical closeness between nude men and women do not escape our attention. In placing the scene in a Greek *palaestra*, too, the reader recalls that this often functions as an erotic setting.<sup>103</sup> It is highly likely that Propertius is saying one thing and implying another, implicitly suggesting that the reader take a prurient interest in viewing the nude exerciser while at the same time praising the absence of such an interest in Spartan society.

The middle part of the elegy is a series of descriptions that detail various forms of exercise that the girl undertakes. Propertius recounts her actions with such

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Plato, *Charmides* 154e, where Socrates, having observed young men exercising in the *palaestra*, discusses the beauty of Charmides, which then leads on to an enquiry into the nature of *sophrosyne*.



clarity that the mind's eye can construct a vivid picture of each activity. A ball moves through the air (5), a hooked stick clangs against a hoop (6), the finishing line is reached by runners, who are covered in the dust of the track (7). This maiden is also expert at binding her hands in preparation for the discus (9-10) and is at home on horseback, wearing brazen helmet with a sword against her snow-white thigh (11-12). Bare-breasted, she is like an Amazon going to bathe (14). Visual cues (especially *miramur*, 1; *nuda*, 4; and *nudatis...mammis*, 13, on which also see 2.15.5) enhance the vividness of these descriptions, sharpening the image in the reader's mind. Athletic and martial descriptions combine in a similar way in Hellenistic poetry. Callimachus' fifth *Hymn* contains a description of Athena's ablutions and training in an Argive setting, something which could have influenced Propertius' description and sentiment. We shall see later that there are further similarities to the *Bath of Pallas* in the context of gazing. Theocritus *Idyll* 22 contains a detailed scene where the combatants use leather thongs to strengthen their fists, while winding strapping around their arms (79-82).<sup>104</sup> Here though, it is the effects of combat that predominate. The entire scene is 'almost... cinematographic', and the focus on movement and the transition through a variety of athletic postures has a similar effect to what Propertius achieves with his Spartan girl.<sup>105</sup> The level of detail in these descriptions is not as vivid as Theocritus' account but 3.14 is, nevertheless, remarkable for the way in which it stitches together a number of athletic scenes, each of which is given more attention to detail than the few words allocated would at first suggest.

The physical exertion of the Spartan girl in 3.14 is an inversion of the erotic wrestle, which occurs throughout Propertius' poetry and certainly goes a long way toward establishing the *nudus Amor* image as a firm favourite. A particularly sensuous and highly personal example is the opening poem of Book 2. While on one level the poem acts as a standard elegiac *recusatio*, we find that erotic detailing creeps into almost every aspect of the text, a fitting way for Propertius to prove his ineptitude at dealing with the high themes of epic. Having also excused himself from duties to country and pasture, Propertius reveals that his battles are fought against his mistress in a narrow bed (2.1.45-48).<sup>106</sup> The erotic connotations of *conterat* (46) have

<sup>104</sup> In 3.14, Propertius also mentions both Castor and Pollux at v. 17.

<sup>105</sup> Zanker 1987: 86.

<sup>106</sup> Papanghelis 1987: 23-24.

been discussed by Papangelis, and only help to bring out more pointedly the underlying eroticism.<sup>107</sup>

It is clear from these few examples that the Propertian eye is both adept at the use of colour and sensitive to Nature's own virtues. There is an undoubtedly Alexandrian feel to Propertius' poetry in these passages. The overarching presence of the visual, and the use of colour-contrasts or vigorous motion bring the poet's subjects before the reader's eyes. *Enargeia*, then, has a predominant role. The topos of *nudus Amor* is yet another example of both appropriation of certain Hellenistic traits into a Roman invention and the pre-eminence granted by a seminal elegist to the visual reception of *erōs*.

### *The erotic gaze*

Propertius' treatment of the *nudus Amor* topos combines visual description with other vivid details in a way that appeals to the mind's eye. The same can be said of gaze and *erōs*. Propertius often places the reader in the position of the viewer. Vision is a predominant part and, like *nudus Amor*, is a recurring element that reflects the role of *enargeia* in Roman elegy. Let us start with a striking example which is replete with visual references:<sup>108</sup>

Io me felicem! io nox mihi candida! io tu,	1
lectule deliciis facte beate meis!	2
illa meos somno lapsos patefecit ocellos	7
ore suo et dixit 'sicine, lente, iaces?'	
quam uario amplexu mutamus brachia, quantum	
oscula sunt labris ista morata meis!	10
quam multa apposita narramus uerba lucerna	3
quantaque sublato lumine rix fuit!	
nam modo nudatis mecum est luctata papillis;	5
interdum tunica duxit operta moram.	6

<sup>107</sup> Papangelis 1987: 23-24.

<sup>108</sup> This arrangement of the text is suggested by Heyworth 2007: 58. This differs markedly from traditional editions, which tend to follow the manuscript tradition; see, for example, Camps 1967: 30, 124-126. Heyworth's well-reasoned argument, based on the logical flow of the poem and incorporating the best conjectures of recent editions, offers an easily-understandable reading; see Heyworth 2009: 173-174.

non iuuat in caeco Venerem corrumpere motu: 11  
 si nescis, oculi sunt in amore duces. 12 (Prop. 2.15.1-12)

O lucky me! O night, bright for me! O you, little bed made happy by my sweet love! She opened with her kiss my eyes lulled into sleep and she said ‘are you lying so, sleepyhead?’ Then we exchange so many embraces, how much those kisses stay on my lips! How many stories we tell by lamplight and what a great tussle there was when the light was removed! For now she wrestled me with breast nude; and then dallied and delayed wrapped in her tunic. It is not helpful to ruin Love in movement that is blind: if you didn’t know, the eyes are the leaders in love.

We recall that Dionysius gives prominence to sight as the primary receptor for vivid descriptions (*Lys.* 7). In Propertius 2.15, we are able to see how sight and seeing serves a double purpose. Having been awoken by a kiss, Propertius is then led by his eyes and desires Cynthia’s form. It is by lamplight that lovemaking occurs: to turn off the lamp is to deny sight and therefore a full appreciation of erotic pleasure. If Cynthia will not let Propertius cast his eyes on her body, he will tear off her clothes.<sup>109</sup> The eyes are truly, then, the leaders in love.

Propertius’ interest is the visual, sexual appeal of Cynthia. We find a parallel mode of viewing described in Mulvey’s essay on viewing women in Hollywood cinema.<sup>110</sup> Mulvey’s contention, that the female is objectified by the male gaze, aptly encapsulates the sort of erotic gaze we identify in Propertius. She notes that the cinema offers pleasure in the form of scopophilia: ‘looking itself is a source of pleasure’.<sup>111</sup> The cinema audience is most often put in the position of the male ‘looker’, and thereby can both appreciate the female as visual object as well as experience the desire or desire for control that the looker may have.<sup>112</sup> The female is thereby objectified:<sup>113</sup>

In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. the erotic wrestle, above, p. 54.

<sup>110</sup> Mulvey 1975.

<sup>111</sup> Mulvey 1975: 8.

<sup>112</sup> Mulvey 1975: 12.

<sup>113</sup> Mulvey 1975: 11.

Mulvey's essay, while expressly for political purposes,<sup>114</sup> nevertheless constructs an apt model for our purposes: throughout the rest of this chapter, we will return to Mulvey's conclusions about gaze and looking, and we shall find that the idea of an audience being put in the position of the male lead in a Hollywood film is not much different to the position a reader of Propertius' poetry may find himself in. We also find that Mulvey's essay applies to some of Tibullus' work, bringing into sharper focus some striking elements of *Elegy* 1.8. That an essay on visual pleasure in cinema should be so applicable to erotic elegy is at first surprising, but on reflection fitting, given the predominant role sight plays in each.

If we return to the description of the Spartan girl exercising nude in 3.14, the sort of 'to-be-looked-at-ness' Mulvey identifies is present. We noted that Propertius praises with one eye and 'scopes' with the other; the inversion of the *nudus Amor* theme and his praise of straightforwardness in love are almost betrayed by the eroticisation of his subject. The girl is alone, exercising nude among male onlookers. This satisfies Mulvey's observation that the female figure has to be both looked at and displayed. Propertius' interest in her movement (an important part of the passage's *enargeia*) and the activities she undertakes suggests an appreciative gaze. We noted earlier the phrase *nudatis...mammis* as an example of a visual cue.<sup>115</sup> It is part of a succession of images, from Amazons to Castor and Pollux to Helen that emphasize apparently asexual and uncontroversial nudity.<sup>116</sup> Helen's nudity before the twins did

<sup>114</sup> Mulvey 1975: 6, 18.

<sup>115</sup> See above, p. 54.

<sup>116</sup> An interesting textual issue presents itself in the MSS of 3.14. The MSS have vv. 13-14 as

qualis Amazonidum nudatis bellica mammis  
Thermodontiacis turba lauatur aquis.

Just as the warlike band of Amazons bathe with bare breasts in the Thermodon's waters.

Heyworth's 2007 OCT gives the following apparatus for v. 14:

14 turba *Gulielmius*: turba  $\Omega$  uagatur *Heinsius*: lauatur  $\Omega$  (-ntur *L*): agit- *Faltin*  
agris (*uel* equis) *Heinsius*: aquis  $\Omega$

Camps 1985 makes no changes to the MSS, nor does Goold 1990. The comparison made in the MSS is more erotic and even more suggestive of a furtive, erotic gaze, with the reader now visualising bathing Amazons, something which heightens the intimacy of viewing nude women. Editors have struggled with *lauatur*. Heinsius' *uagatur* creates an image of the band of warlike Amazons wandering bare-breasted through the fields (*agris* for *aquis*) by the Thermodon. Faltin tries *agitatur* and Heyworth 2009: 361 also suggests but dismisses *uehantur* along with Faltin's conjecture as palaeographically more remote. In the end, Heyworth's 2007 text adopts Heinsius' *uagatur* and *agris*. On this decision, Heyworth 2009: 360 notes that '[n]owhere else are Amazons described as bathing in the Thermodon; dressed for war they are noteworthy for their *nudatis...mammis*, but not when washing in the river'.

not make her blush (*nec fratres erubuisse deos*; 20). We can again accuse Propertius of being a little disingenuous here. While Helen may not have been embarrassed, the erotic implications of viewing the most beautiful woman in the world in such a state of undress would not escape the reader, who, like the cinema audience in Mulvey's essay, becomes a furtive gazer, maybe but not necessarily taking Castor's or Pollux's place. Surely Helen, like the Amazons and the Spartan girl, becomes an unwitting exhibitionist, to be looked at and displayed by the reader's male gaze.

We can also apply Mulvey's points to the above passage from 2.15, which we identified earlier as developing the vividness and the eroticism of the scene through an appeal to sight. Propertius is clearly the 'bearer of the look' and he describes Cynthia's physical features so that the reader can also construct an image of her.<sup>117</sup> The emphasis is undoubtedly erotic. The reader now shares with Propertius both the power of the gaze and the visual reception of Cynthia as an erotic object. The reader's identification with Propertius' gaze means, to quote Mulvey, that 'the power of male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look'.<sup>118</sup>

*Elegy 2.2*, while one of the most fragmentary poems in the Propertian corpus, is another excellent example of the pictorial nature of Propertius' intimate descriptions, although his pictorialism is confined mostly to similes. Propertius' descriptions help the reader to picture Cynthia, providing details about her features that contribute to an overall picture that is perceived by the mind's eye. These descriptions include colour and form, and it is possible despite the suggested

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I am not so sure. While it would indeed be unremarkable to describe anyone as naked when bathing, it certainly brings the idea of the erotic gaze into sharper focus. The intimacy of bathing and the prurient interest that accompanies spying on someone in such a position is a common subject. In mythology, for example, Erymanthos is blinded after witnessing Aphrodite bathing. Hellenistic poetry and sculpture provide further examples. In literature, Callimachus' fifth *Hymn* (the *Bath of Pallas*) tells of Teiresias' blinding after unwittingly viewing Athena at her bath. The same sort of sense is evoked in the sculptures of Capitoline and Crouching Aphrodites (*LIMC* 2.2, 'Aphrodite': il. 409 (Museo Capitolino, Rome); *LIMC* 2.2, 'Aphrodite': il. 1018 (Museo Nazionale Romano at Terme, Rome)). Zanker (2004: 107-110 and ill. 24-25) notes how a viewer of these artworks is put in a position similar to Teiresias: it is to this unauthorized gaze that the sculpture reacts, attempting to hide her sexual beauty. The effect, however, only serves to emphasize the intimate and voyeuristic eroticism of the moment. Returning to Propertius, the image of Amazons bathing may be an attempt to evoke this sort of scene, where the reader again becomes party to what is at once a professedly virtuous and un-erotic scene, but at the same time imbued with erotic connotations to do with gaze, exposure and exhibitionism. Moreover, Callimachus' Athena has Amazonian qualities that make her an appropriate model for Propertius' Amazons: for example, she is described as returning from the Gigantomachy covered in gore (1-13). Consequently, the reading of the MSS has a lot going for it.

<sup>117</sup> Mulvey 1975: 11-12.

<sup>118</sup> Mulvey 1975: 12.

lacunae<sup>119</sup> on either side of lines 5-8 to put together a fairly accurate image of Cynthia:

fulua coma est longaeque manus; it maxima toto  
corpore, ut incedit uel Ioue digna soror,  
aut ut Munychias Pallas spatiatur ad aras,  
Gorgonis anguiferae pectus operta comis... (Prop. 2.2.5-8)

Her hair is golden and her hands slender; her whole body is outstanding, she bears herself as though she were a sister worthy of Jove, or as Pallas processes to Athenian altars, breast covered by the hair of the snake-bearing Gorgon.

In creating a mental image of Cynthia for the reader, Propertius is clearly displaying the sort of qualities that make up *enargeia*: colour (*fulua*) and shape (*longaeque manus*) help the reader to picture a suitable model; similes, introduced by *ut*, invite the reader to use the goddesses as comparands. In comparing Cynthia to goddesses, Propertius ennobles her. He also relies on the reader being aware of the sort of physical attributes to which he refers. The learned reader would therefore recall literary descriptions of a goddess' physical features: Hellenistic descriptions such as that of Athena in Callimachus' fifth *Hymn* may have assisted him. There is also the distinct possibility that the reader might dip into his knowledge of contemporary and earlier visual representations of goddesses from sculpture or painting.<sup>120</sup> We have seen that invitations to contemplate visual artwork to assist in the interpretation of a literary description is not new, but in the personal, erotic context of Propertius' description of Cynthia, there is certainly added point.

The mythological reference to the judgment of Paris is also expressed in visual terms:

cedite iam, diuae quas pastor uiderat olim  
Idaeis tunicas ponere uerticibus. (Prop. 2.2.13-14)

<sup>119</sup> Unlike Camps 1967, Heyworth 2007 does not see 2.2 as a complete poem, but rather a series of fragments. Accordingly, he posits lacunae after v. 3 and between v. 8 and v. 13, following Housman's exclusion of vv. 9-12 as given by the MSS on the grounds that these were later additions.

<sup>120</sup> We have already noted that the dramatic setting of many of Propertius' elegies display similarities with extant examples of Roman landscape (see above p. 28). We shall also discover in Chapter III that Propertius' knowledge of contemporary and Hellenistic artwork is a crucial part of his verbal painting and, indeed, that he also uses the reader's own knowledge of such artworks to great effect (on this point in particular, see below, p. 75).

Now give way, goddesses whom once the shepherd [i.e. Paris] saw cast aside their tunics on the peaks of Mount Ida.

The use of *uiderat* emphasizes the act of looking, and the image of the three goddesses casting aside their tunics eroticises not only Paris' invited gaze, but also that of the reader, who becomes an unwitting (and *uninvited*) spectator at a very private unveiling. Let us again recall Mulvey's points on eroticism and the look in cinema, for they are pertinent at this juncture, too. Paris looks, and with him the reader, who also then bears the male gaze. The reader's visualisations take on a voyeuristic quality.

We find a treatment similar to 2.2 in poems 2.3 and 2.4, two other fragmentary elegies in Propertius' second book. It is impossible to reconstruct the relationship between the various extant sections of these poems, although Heyworth's analysis in his companion to the Oxford text synthesizes traditional interpretations with a detailed discussion of his own edition.<sup>121</sup> While Heyworth's emendations have not found favour with some,<sup>122</sup> it is clear that, irrespective of word order or substitution, 2.3 displays sensitivity towards, and awareness of, sight as an erotic sense:

nec me tam facies, quamuis sit candida, cepit  
 (lilia non domina sunt magis alba mea),  
 nec de more comae per leuia colla fluentes,  
 non oculi, geminae, sidera nostra, faces,  
 nec si quando Arabo lucet bombyce papilla  
 (non sum de nihilo blandus amator ego)... (Prop. 2.3.9-16)

And it is not so much her beauty that has captured me, though she is fair (lilies are not whiter than my mistress), nor her hair flowing over her smooth neck in customary fashion, not her eyes, twin torches, our lodestars, nor if ever a breast shines in Arabian silk (my rhetorical power as a lover is not over nothing)... (trans. Heyworth 2009)

Propertius goes on to claim that Cynthia's beauty is not what captivates him, but rather her dancing, singing, and writing (17-22). Yet one cannot escape the impression that his acute awareness of her 'visual' qualities suggests that her looks do

<sup>121</sup> Heyworth 2009: 118-129.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, Holzberg 2009.

in fact have an erotic appeal that affects him deeply. We can appreciate the fairness of her skin (whiter than lilies), the drape of her hair along her neck, her white skin, her breasts; these are things which, according to Propertius, inspire him as a lover (*non sum de nihilo blandus amator ego*). He takes time to linger on these attractive physical features. So Propertius is a little disingenuous when he suggests they do not matter.<sup>123</sup> At the centre of it all are Cynthia's eyes, 'twin torches, our lodestars'.<sup>124</sup>

We are presented, then, with an image of Cynthia that could just as easily describe a work of art, a statue or painting, such is the detail; again we are reminded of the inherently visual quality of *enargeia*, where descriptions are vivid to the point of turning *reader* into *viewer*. Indeed, Propertius himself returns to Cynthia's *physical* rather than *intellectual* beauty with a comparison to Helen (32) before suggesting that an artist might use Cynthia as a model, should he wish to surpass earlier painters:

si quis uult fama tabulas anteire uetustas,  
hic dominam exemplo ponat in arte meam... (Prop. 2.3.41-42)

If anyone wants to surpass the ancient paintings in fame, let him put my mistress as his model in his art.

These painters are not named, but likely candidates include Zeuxis and Apelles.<sup>125</sup> Camps also suggests that *tabulas...uetustas* might refer to paintings of Helen and other ancient beauties.<sup>126</sup> These possibilities can easily coexist. Consider, for example, the story of Zeuxis and the painting of Helen. A composite of the five most beautiful women of Croton ended up being the only way Zeuxis could achieve an accurate depiction (Cic. *De Inv.* 2.1.1-3). In 2.3, Propertius claims that one woman – Cynthia – is at once more attractive than Helen and capable of serving as a model for a painter wishing to paint the most attractive woman. This reinforces the primacy of the physical descriptions in vv. 9-16; Propertius seems indeed to have been again

<sup>123</sup> A conclusion reached, too, by Papanghelis 1987: 56-58 who argues that the physical descriptions in vv. 9-16 far exceed the spiritual-artistic descriptions of vv. 17-22, which 'lag behind in colour and plasticity'. He goes on to cite Cicero's definition of the rhetorical technique of *insinuat* (*Inv. Rhet.* 1.15.20), which could well be at play in 2.3's disingenuous rejection of physical beauty.

<sup>124</sup> Propertius disavows the power of Cynthia's eyes in this passage, but remember that Propertius' *oeuvre* opens so dramatically with *Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis* (1.1).

<sup>125</sup> Camps 1967: 82-83. Propertius mentions Apelles by name in 3.9.

<sup>126</sup> Camps 1967: 83.



rather disingenuous in proclaiming the spiritual-intellectual qualities of Cynthia paramount. This, as we shall see shortly, is not the only occasion on which Propertius comments on art.<sup>127</sup> For now, however, let us simply regard such a passage as one that demonstrates Propertius' aesthetic, indeed sculptor's or painter's eye regarding the female form. We can also draw the conclusion that *enargeia* is present in the imagery that describes Cynthia's physical appearance.

Tibullus has not received as much critical attention as Propertius when it comes to the intimate visual description of persons. In the first chapter, however, we found that Tibullus' evocation of space and setting is just as pictorially focused as Propertius. The same is not necessarily the case when it comes to instances of intimate description, but I do not agree with the general conclusion that it is virtually absent. For example, in a statement that sums up also the conclusions of Cairns and Luck, Papangelis remarks that 'Tibullus...betrays none of Propertius' ocular avidity'.<sup>128</sup> For the most part, Tibullus' dreamy poetry lacks the sharp edge of personal detailing that Propertius offers. It also avoids direct comparisons with visual artworks beyond landscape painting. However, it might be more appropriate to characterise Tibullus' deployment of *enargeia* as judiciously sparing rather than nonexistent.<sup>129</sup> We shall find, as with Propertius, Tibullus is in fact adept at deploying visual references in a way that sharpens descriptions that are in themselves already vivid, enhancing and encouraging the reader to picture in his mind's eye the thing being described. Appeals to sight are therefore central to Tibullus' descriptive technique.

His first book contains three elegies that deal with the theme of homosexual love: 1.4, 1.8 and 1.9. These poems concern a young man, Marathus, who plays the role of *puer delicatus*, and whose fickleness ties Tibullus in knots, leaving our poet at the mercy of the whims of his younger lover.<sup>130</sup> In 1.4, he comes to Priapus seeking advice, which he will then share with others and apply to his own loves. Unfortunately, things do not work out as planned, and Priapus' advice is ineffectual: Marathus, the boy whom Tibullus is pursuing, seems unmoved and disinterested. A change of circumstances occurs in 1.8, but Tibullus remains a teacher of love,

<sup>127</sup> See below, Chapter III.

<sup>128</sup> Papangelis 1987: 208 cites Cairns 1979: 134, 140-141 and Luck 1969: 124. Maltby 2006: 168 addresses the related matter of Tibullus' apparent lack of interest in vision as a tool of Love.

<sup>129</sup> Quintilian's description of Tibullus' poetic style as *tersus atque elegans* (*Inst. Or.* 10.1.93) presents an authentic Roman perspective on this matter.

<sup>130</sup> For a detailed examination of *puer delicatus*, see Murgatroyd 1977.

advising a boy on how to get a girl, and the girl on the benefits of the same boy. Things again turn sour and Tibullus is left cursing both parties. By 1.9, Tibullus is a failed *praeceptor* (*non ego fallere doctus*; 37) and has also lost his boy, who is presumably Marathus;<sup>131</sup> punishment is a recurring theme, directed against both Marathus and the other man.

In 1.8, Tibullus as *praeceptor amoris* engages in a long, vivid, and highly erotic treatment of Marathus' tryst with Pholoe. There are echoes of Propertius' *nudus Amor*, and Tibullus is most certainly attuned to visual qualities, more so than he is often credited with being. Marathus' reception of Pholoe and his reaction to her beauty forms the primary thrust of the poem. Visual description – most certainly in line with our understanding of *enargeia* – dominates the 78 lines. Tibullus scolds Pholoe for leading Marathus on; she is cast as the classic tease, and it is through her 'reveal and reject' method of toying with Marathus that she torments him.

Tibullus blends the *seruitium amoris* theme – traditionally between male lover and female beloved – with the *puer delicatus* topos, although the reader does not realise this until line 49 when Marathus is mentioned by name, confirming him as the subject of the poem.<sup>132</sup> This is by all means a subtle reworking, whereby the perturbation that Marathus the *puer delicatus* causes Tibullus is presented as the inversion of the male-female *seruitium amoris* Marathus himself is experiencing with Pholoe. He then seeks advice from none other than Tibullus, who is now also playing the role of *praeceptor amoris*. Pholoe herself then becomes the object of Tibullus' own anger, as he curses her for maltreating Marathus, who himself maltreated Tibullus: 'Pholoe, the scorner of the scorner scorned (Marathus), will herself be scorned in turn'.<sup>133</sup>

Winks and nods open 1.8, subtle body language and quiet words to which the reader will later return in order to complete the picture, for these are the signs of the adulterous lover. For now, however, this could be the start of any erotic elegy. The first significant descriptive passage combines an eye for exquisite detail and a possible allusion to Callimachus:

quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos

<sup>131</sup> Murgatroyd 1977: 111.

<sup>132</sup> Maltby 2002: 302 identifies a number of other topical variations in 1.8, as well as links to various potential Hellenistic precedents, among them *Anth. Pal.* 5.71 (Callimachus).

<sup>133</sup> Murgatroyd 1977: 116.

saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas,  
 quid fuco splendente genas ornare, quid unguis  
 artificis docta subsecuisse manu?  
 frustra iam uestes, frustra mutantur amictus  
 ansaque compressos colligat arta pedes. (Tib. 1.8.9-14)

What use is it now for you to gather up those soft curls and to set and reset your hair so often, what point to painting your cheeks with glowing blush, what's up with getting your nails trimmed by the skilled hand of a professional? Besides, it's pointless to keeping changing your clothes and pointless to change your cloak and squeeze your feet in shoes strapped tightly.

There is no escaping the vividness of such intimate description. Our subject is obviously careful to appear well-groomed, and fashionably so, selecting and re-selecting clothes. The appearance of both face and hair is also noted. We are reminded of Callimachus' description of Aphrodite in *Hymn 5*, where she alters her hair several times before attending the judgment of Paris:

...Κύπρις δὲ διαυγέα χαλκὸν ἐλοῖσα  
 πολλάκι τὰν αὐτὰν δις μετέθηκε κόμαν (Call. *Hymn 5*.21-22)

But Cypris took the shining bronze and often altered and again altered the same lock.  
 (trans. Mair)

Tibullus is often considered to be somewhat distant from his Hellenistic predecessors, in that he does not refer directly to any of them. While finessing one's hair is a common enough action, there are similarities to Callimachus' description.<sup>134</sup> In particular, Tibullus translates κόμαν as *comas* and, like Callimachus, refers to the repeated rearranging of hair. Furthermore, such a reference to Callimachus would be in line with both Tibullus' own reputation as an extremely learned poet and the wider concerns of the genre for literary allusion and learning. We see this in Callimachus in Aphrodite's coquettish fastidiousness, and the narcissism inherent in her use of the mirror. In Tibullus, the subject's self-image is again to the fore, with an interest in cosmetics and appearance dominating the first part of 1.8, although any hint of narcissism implicit in this is perhaps better described as teen angst.

<sup>134</sup> A view supported by recent editors. See Maltby 2002: 305; also Murgatroyd 1991: 238.

What makes this passage all the more striking is its careful deception. The assumption is that the pre-date preparation refers to a girl at toilet, although gender-markers are avoided throughout the passage. The allusion to Callimachus supports this conclusion, as does the movement from hair-arranging to the application of rouge, to indecision over garments and the squeezing of a slender foot into a strapped shoe. Surely the reader has sufficient detail here to compose a mental image in the round of a girl, about to go out, hurriedly switching skirts and peering critically into the mirror? Tibullus capitalises on this. There is no *she* at toilet; there is instead an anxious young man wanting to give the right impression to his belle! The success of this twist relies entirely on the reader having been deceived by the description given. For this deceit to be ‘bought’ by the reader, it needs to be sufficiently detailed that the reader can reasonably infer that the information given pertains to a vain young woman. The reader must be drawn in. Tibullus even hints wittily at his deception of the reader by chiding Marathus for disguising his appearance: *desine dissimulare* (7).

Significantly, we have a good illustration of the sort of deception employed by Tibullus in the sculpture of the sleeping Hermaphrodite.<sup>135</sup> Approached from one angle, the viewer has enough information to conclude that the figure in question is an attractive young woman. Indeed, the figure leads the viewer on, with its nudity, emphasis on the curvy buttocks and the carefully-arranged hair. The form appears feminine and eroticised. It is only when the viewer makes his or her way around the sculpture that the initial impression is found to be false: just as the *feminine* buttocks form an erotic centrepiece from behind, so the Hermaphrodite’s *male* genitals do from the front.

Cairns has discussed generic deception at length, noting how Tibullus employs various generic conventions in order to lead the reader to make a false assumption about the identity of the elegy he or she may be reading.<sup>136</sup> The slow feeding-out of information to the reader is a well-known technique in ancient poetry in general<sup>137</sup> and a special trait of Hellenistic poetry.<sup>138</sup> One epigram in particular, possibly by Asclepiades of Samos or Posidippus, sums up the problem of accurate identification:

<sup>135</sup> Pliny the Elder mentions a sleeping Hermaphrodite made by the sculptor Polycles (*NH* 34.19). A good extant example of which is in the Museo Nazionale Romano at Terme, 1087. *LIMC* 5.2, ‘Hermaphroditos’: il. 56c.

<sup>136</sup> Cairns 1979: ch. 7.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Pind. *Nem.* 1.35–40.

<sup>138</sup> Cairns 1979: 158–162.

Κύπριδος ἅδ' εἰκὼν· φέρ' ἰδόμεθα μὴ Βερενίκας·  
 διστάζω ποτέρῃ φῆ τις ὁμοιοτέραν. (Ascl. 39 GP; Anth. Pal. 16.68)

This is a representation of Cypris. Come, let's make sure it's not of Berenice.

I am uncertain to which of them someone would say it is more similar.

(trans. Sens 2002)

Asclepiades refers here to a mistake a viewer might make about the statue's identity. So beautiful is Berenice that she could conceivably be confused with Aphrodite (and vice-versa).<sup>139</sup> The reader is given a tip-off that something may be awry when he or she encounters εἰκὼν, having just been told that Aphrodite is the subject. Surely ἄγαλμα would be more appropriate than εἰκὼν? Then, the reader realises that he has been misled: it may in fact be a representation of Berenice, in which case εἰκὼν would be wholly appropriate. Indeed, this style of deception is part of Asclepiades' epigrammatic technique, to the extent that Sens describes it as a 'striking feature'.<sup>140</sup> It is highly likely that the ancient reader would also have been aware of Asclepiades' effective use of deception in Hellenistic works; Tibullus' visual deception could take inspiration from such examples. The sculptor has led the viewer, and Asclepiades the reader, potentially to make a mistake about who is being depicted.

Tibullus' use of deception, then, has precedents in both artistic and literary contexts. But as the nature of the deception in 1.8 is based on the reader's false assumption made after (mis)reading visual cues, artistic precedent should not in this case necessarily be subordinate to the literary one.<sup>141</sup> Perhaps the best summation of Tibullus' deception is to classify it as a brilliant trumping of the topos of art's ability to make a mistake about the real thing. In this way, we can include both the visual and verbal form of deception that Tibullus incorporates.

The girl in Tibullus 1.8, whom we later learn is named Pholoe, goes without any make-up, yet still pleases our boy (15-16). *Nudus Amor*, so common in Propertius, makes its appearance in Tibullus in this striking way. The role-reversal of the insecure, image-conscious boy and the self-confident, *au naturel* girl strikes a

<sup>139</sup> On the exact Berenice depicted, see Sens 2002: 254 n. 21.

<sup>140</sup> Sens 2011: 1, who adduces in particular *Anth. Pal.* 5.153, 5.158, 5.162, 12.161, and 13.23.

<sup>141</sup> For a different but nevertheless related use of visual deception, we may return to Propertius' nude Spartan girl (Prop. 3.14). At v. 5, where Heyworth 2007 amends the text to *flectit*, Camps follows the MSS and reads *fallit*. On these different readings, see Heyworth 2009: 359-360. Following Camps' reading, then, we are exposed to another literary recognition of deception, with the suggestion that the ball 'causes to deceive the eyes' due, no doubt, to its swift line of flight; see Camps 1985: 121-122.

chord with the reader, whose expectations have just been turned on their heads. Tibullus then evokes the erotic physicality of a sexual tryst, repeatedly invoking images of lovers entwined (26, 32, 36). These contortions are all very sensual: thighs are crossed over one another,<sup>142</sup> smooth-cheeked lovers hold each other in tight embrace, and kisses are planted on tender breasts. Comparisons can be made to Propertius' nude wrestle with Cynthia in 2.15. And, as Shea notes, the success of *Elegy* 1.8 hinges on the graphic imagery: '[s]ensuous and sexual images which represent reality and true meaning are opposed to cosmetic images and images of dress which represent illusion and false meaning'.<sup>143</sup> The role of the erotic gaze in all this is to enhance the visual appeal of the vivid descriptions; the reader is encouraged through the judicious use of visual imagery to picture the scene as it unfolds before him, taking the place of the gazer and being integrated into the action.

If we take Mulvey's approach to 1.8.9-14, Tibullus has successfully reversed the order of things: Marathus is the 'exhibitionist', the one who is 'looked at and displayed'; by contrast the girl therefore becomes the 'bearer of the look'.<sup>144</sup> In becoming the exhibitionist, Marathus has also to an extent given up his masculine appearance and adopted feminine practices; the allusion to Callimachus' description of Aphrodite affirms this. This leads us to an interesting conclusion, that Marathus has to all intents and purposes become a woman, thereby allowing himself to connote Mulvey's to-be-looked-at-ness. Of course, as an *eromenos*, Marathus is hardly meant to epitomise the characteristics of a Roman man, but in this passage his feminisation goes beyond the boyishness of his smooth cheeks. Pholoe, who neither uses make-up nor seems to care about what clothes she wears, has perhaps been masculinised, so that she may become the bearer of the look in a way that fulfils the criterion of masculinity. Who is gazing and who is the object of the gaze is thus an important aspect of this passage. It also contributes significantly to the overall thrust of the poem, which relies on the deceptive set-up for dramatic effect as well as for illustrating the hapless quandary in which Tibullus, the purported *praeceptor amoris*, finds himself.

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<sup>142</sup> Maltby 2002: 309 offers a number of archaic and Hellenistic precedents for the polyptoton of v. 26 (*oscula, sed femori conseruisse femor*), among them Archil. 119 West, Anacreon 439 PMG, and Theoc. *Id.* 2.140 and 12.32.

<sup>143</sup> Shea 1998: 73.

<sup>144</sup> See above, p. 56.

The other Marathus poems contain similarly visual references, albeit on a smaller scale than in 1.8. The characterisation of Tibullus' old, gouty rival for Marathus' affections is such an example.<sup>145</sup> He is stricken by vile gout (*foeda podagra*; 1.9.73), a striking contrast to his wife, who is a *culta puella*. And his wife is not preening herself or so proficient in bed because of him; she is actively courting the attention of other men. The whole passage is replete with visual imagery, enhanced by the *senex / puella* contrast, which the speaker renders so repellent:

tune putas illam pro te disponere crines	67	
aut tenues denso pectere dente comas?		
ista haec persuadet facies, auroque lacertos		
uinciat et Tyrio prodeat apta sinu?	70	
non tibi sed iuueni cuidam uult bella uideri.		
deuoeat pro quo remque domumque tuam.		
nec facit hoc uitio, sed corpora foeda podagra		
et senis amplexus culta puella fugit.	74	(Tib. 1.9.67-74)

Do you think it's for you that she sets her curls or untangles her silky hair with a fine-toothed comb? Is it your face that encourages her, that she rings her arms with gold and goes out clothed in Tyrian dress? It is not you but a young man for whom she wants to appear beautiful. For him she would sacrifice both your money and your house. Nor does she do this wrongly, for such a lady of taste recoils from your smelly gout-stricken body and your grotty old embraces.

The importance of *appearing beautiful* (*uult bella uideri*), in order to attract the young's man attention, is worth mention. With this we return to the image in 1.8 of Marathus applying make-up and arranging his hair to look beautiful for Pholoe; the

<sup>145</sup> Tibullus does not name the characters in 1.9, but it is almost universally accepted that the boy is Marathus, the old man is quite possibly (if not, for some, certainly) the same person as the *canus amator* of 1.8.29, and the girl who in 1.9 is the old man's wife is in fact the Pholoe of 1.8 (Cairns 1979: 152; Lee 1990: 142; Lyne 1980: 170-175; Maltby 2002: 322-323; Shea 1998: 75). This creates a love 'triangle' that is particularly convoluted and indeed bordering on the comic. To spell it out, we have Tibullus, who is pursuing Marathus and in competition with the *canus amator* for the boy's affections. Marathus is playing Tibullus and the *canus amator* off against one another, all the while courting the affections of Pholoe, who is in fact the *canus amator*'s wife. She in turn is now paying extra attention to her own appearance, which makes the *canus amator* think that he is a satisfying lover. It would seem, according to his rival Tibullus, that this is certainly not the case; it is the adulterous trysts with Marathus that have her glowing. Perhaps, in an act of compassion (or, rather ironically, to save face), in 1.9 Tibullus is being discreet in preserving everyone's anonymity.

role-reversal is a striking inversion of the situation in 1.8.<sup>146</sup> It also reminds us of the woman as an object to be looked at and desired, in much the same way as we encountered with Propertius and in Mulvey's analysis of the masculine erotic gaze.

The snide tone of the passage also suggests parallels with Catullus 71, where the sexual desperation of another dirty and smelly old man leads to a rather uncomfortable coitus for both parties: *illam affligit odore, ipse perit podagra* ('the stench assaults her, the gout pains him'; 6). Catullus' pithy snipe is extrapolated to its fullest in Tibullus. The description is fleshed out, with symbols of wealth and refinement like Tyrian purple and golden jewellery. Likewise, the choices of verb are enlightening and vivid, particularly the connotative *deuoueat* and the recoil and repulsion suggested by *fugit*. This combination of highly descriptive language and visual references is used to good effect: Tibullus paints a narrative scene, where such detailing sharpens the contrast between the two figures. Here, then, we have a most effective deployment of visual description, not dissimilar to anything we have met thus far in Propertius and characteristic of Roman love elegy in general, although this time Amor is decidedly more vulgar.

The Marathus poems are not the only occasions on which Tibullus is drawn to make such pictorially-detailed passages, though they are striking examples.<sup>147</sup> We find such a description in 1.1, where Tibullus fantasizes about his death and old age (59-72). Eyes are a particularly important feature of this passage: Tibullus wishes to gaze on Delia as he dies (59), and weeping (63, 66) is a recurring motif. Tibullus' failing grasp (*deficiente manu*; 60) looks forward to the erotic physicality of love's passions in 1.8; the young Pholoe's entwined limbs are vigorous, whereas Tibullus, aged and infirm, is only able to look on Delia and not touch. It is therefore possible to find examples in Tibullan poetry of intimate, pictorial description. That Tibullus chooses to explore sight and *enargeia* at a point where he is mixing traditional topoi and exploring elements of deception must surely add to the overall effect.

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<sup>146</sup> *tune putas illam pro te disponere crines / aut tenues denso pectere dente comas?* in 1.9.67-68 matches well with *quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos / saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas* in 1.8.9-10, itself as we have seen (above, p. 64) an imitation of Callimachus' description of Aphrodite's vanity in his fifth *Hymn*.

<sup>147</sup> One of the samples that foreshadowed this chapter's subject-matter was taken from Tibullus' other homoerotic elegy which relates a conversation between Tibullus and a statue of Priapus 1.4. See above, p. 49.



## Conclusion

The prominence of sight in descriptions of persons is a major feature of Roman elegy. Propertius and Tibullus are in this sense drawing on a long literary heritage, which can be traced back to the Hellenistic poets, who were themselves often expanding and re-presenting earlier literature. Their visual attitude and interest in the relationship between sight and *erōs* makes the connection with our Roman poets particularly strong. Propertius is particularly attuned to the role of sight in creating intimate and erotic descriptions. Tibullus, too, shows that he is able to employ visual imagery in a way that emphasizes the erotic nature of a scene. Although he is less forthcoming with intimate description, he proves to be capable of matching Propertius' vividness. Such vivid descriptions have been shown to produce the effect of *enargeia* in that the reader pictures in his mind's eye the things the poets describe.

Throughout this chapter we have touched on the use of common elegiac motifs, in particular the interaction between these and the types of description found in Propertius and Tibullus. *Nudus Amor*, for example, is at the intersection between a topos and Propertian 'ocular avidity', to borrow Lyne's expression. Tibullus' mixing of the *puer delicatus* and *praeceptor amoris* topoi with intimate description represents a sophisticated example of how the Augustan elegists were able at once to work within an established literary tradition while maintaining a sense of originality and vitality in their own poetry.

We are also able to identify similarities and differences between the works of Propertius and Tibullus. For example, the prevailing scholarship is correct in ascribing more pictorialism to Propertius, especially where knowledge of contemporary art is concerned. This particular aspect of his work will come under even greater scrutiny in the following chapter. But this does not mean that Tibullus is incapable of producing highly pictorial passages. There are in fact ample examples of pictorial detail in his work, all in line with Quintilian's evaluation of Tibullus as *tersus atque elegans*. Likewise, both elegists make use of visual references in a way that enhances the descriptions that are part of the surrounding passage. The effect is to sharpen in the reader's mind what is being described, in a way that makes a direct appeal to sight. In doing so, Propertius' and Tibullus' descriptions have qualities that we can attribute to the accomplishment of the aim of *enargeia*.

Mulvey's essay on the act of looking in Hollywood cinema proves to be an ideal model for examining how Propertius and Tibullus present the female figure as object of the male erotic gaze. Our understanding of the elegiac *amator* as a bearer of the look helps to explain the appeals to sight in a way that not only reaffirms the importance of visualisation as part of a wider passage of vivid description but also positions sight and seeing as central to the personal, erotic nature of Roman elegy. The reader is encouraged through visual description to identify with the male lover and to see the object of amorous attention through the erotic gaze of the poem's persona.

### III: Two versions of elegiac immediacy

#### *Introduction*

In this final chapter we consider respectively one aspect of Propertius' and Tibullus' poetry, namely Propertius' artistic eye and Tibullus' *mimesis biou* which entails, as we shall see, the imitation of (everyday) life. In doing so, the conclusions of the preceding chapters are put into practice and we find that visualisation and description often leads to *enargeia*. By choosing for examination two different aspects of our poets' *oeuvres* we are able to see how *enargeia* and the Hellenistic heritage are put to use by each poet. This sharpens in our minds the terms on which our poets engaged with Hellenistic poetry. It also shows the different paths each poet took vis-à-vis the other.

We first examine the art-critical perspective of Propertius in *Elegies* 1.3 and 2.31/32. Here again we find that Propertius displays many of the hallmarks of Hellenistic poetry: attention to detail, mythological references, the language and media of the plastic and visual arts, and, most strikingly, a flair for developing these things so that they achieve *enargeia*. Propertius' interest in the sense of sight spans both *erōs* and art. We examine the skilled deployment of the terminology of sculpture, the role of Cynthia as *objet d'art*, and the realisation of *enargeia* in both erotic and artistic contexts as an aim in itself worthy of our critical attention.

*Mimesis biou*, the imitation of everyday life, is a major part of Tibullus' pastoral poetry. Two in particular, 1.10 and 2.1, employ *mimesis biou* in a way that both complements each poem's structure and coheres with Tibullus' attitude toward rural lifestyle. There are some striking comparisons with Hellenistic poetry, which continues to illustrate a remarkably close relationship between it and Roman elegy. Although this aspect of Tibullan poetry is less erotic, it is still an important area to consider in terms of visualisation and description. Part of the success of Tibullus' *mimesis biou* is accurate, realistic, and vivid description. *Enargeia* is found yet again to be an aim.

### *An artistic eye in Propertius*

There is no doubting the impact visual artwork would have had on Propertius. As Boucher notes, Propertius grew up and flourished in a time where large-scale public monuments graced the city of Rome and representations of the human form loomed large in sculpture and painting.<sup>148</sup> Explicit references to painting and sculpture, and the artists who produced these works, appear variously in the Propertian *oeuvre*.<sup>149</sup> *Elegy* 3.9, for example, contains a catalogue of artists, with a brief description of their respective styles (3.9.9-16). Propertius mentions medium, style, and locale as things which influence our appreciation of artwork. He then draws together some other occupations – the athlete and the soldier (17-19) – before praising Maecenas (20-34). Next, he turns to his own work, and his reluctance to sing epic (35-42). He ends with an explicit reference to Callimachus (43-44) before stating that, should Maecenas wish, he would indeed sing of epic deeds and of the victories of the Augustan state (45-60). For our purposes, let us bear in mind the prominent place occupied by the sculptor and the painter, and the *aretai* of lifelikeness and technical mastery. Two poems, 1.3 and 2.31/32, shed light on Propertius' reception and treatment of artwork through his own 'poetic painting and sculpting'.

Propertius 1.3 contains both a sensitive understanding of the role of visual reception in erotics and a *tour de force* of artistic allusion. Accordingly, it has attracted extensive scholarly comment.<sup>150</sup> Propertius' descriptions of his mythological *exempla* and of Cynthia's form approach tangible plasticity. The detailed study of her drapery reveal a strong artistic connection. The subtle play of light and shade and the effect of the moonbeam even help to bring out some of the details of the bedroom, which is otherwise left largely undescribed. While it is uncertain whether a specific work was Propertius' inspiration, it is possible to conclude that, at the very least, Propertius was drawing on a broad artistic aesthetic when composing his descriptions.

The poem opens with three mythological exempla. First, Ariadne lies asleep on the shore, abandoned by Theseus (1-2). Then, Andromeda, too, rests having been freed from the cliff (3-4). Finally, a maenad, exhausted from frenetic dancing, is

<sup>148</sup> Boucher 1965: 41-42.

<sup>149</sup> Again, Boucher 1965: 46-57 offers detailed considerations of this.

<sup>150</sup> In particular, I am indebted to the insights of Curran 1966; Goold 1990; Harmon 1974; Papanghelis 1987; and, especially, Breed 2003.

sprawled out on the grass by the Apidanus (5-6). Curran's analysis of the structure of these first three couplets shows that they function as a unit, with clever connections between each one.<sup>151</sup> Accordingly, these exemplars can be treated as three tightly-woven descriptions that have the quality of *enargeia*. Intransitive verbs, *iacuit*, *accubuit*, and *concidit*, help position our women. They are all recumbent, and although no specific details are given as to their exact pose, the reader knows that each is tired (*languida, primo...somno, fessa*).<sup>152</sup> The *doctus lector* would also be aware of the erotic connotations attached to each figure. Ariadne is depicted between abandonment by Theseus and 'rescue' by Bacchus. Andromeda sleeps after her rescue by Perseus, whom she would later marry.<sup>153</sup> The maenad is worn out after ecstatic dancing as part of Bacchic revelry, which is connected with amorous activity.<sup>154</sup> Bacchus himself shares the epithet *Eleutherios* ('the liberator') with Eros; the inference that drunken revelry often merges with sexual freedom can be drawn. In the *Bacchae* of Euripides, one of Pentheus' motivations for spying on the Bacchic rituals of the women concerns the monitoring of their sexual behaviour (cf. vv. 215-220).

It is established, then, that these three women are linked through their body position, their physical relaxation, and the erotic undertones that form part of the greater mythic narrative in each story. Propertius in these snapshot-style images has presented the reader with important information.<sup>155</sup> The reader is a gazer, looking upon the form of these sleeping women, and his or her gaze takes in the eroticism of each scene. Accordingly, sight is linked with erotic appreciation.<sup>156</sup> Tatham compares two Hellenistic epigrams which emphasize the erotic appeal of a sleeping lady (*Anth. Pal.* 5.213 = IV *GP* [Posidippus]; *Anth. Pal.* 5.174 [Meleager]).<sup>157</sup> In 1.3, each image is also steadily increasing example of visual eroticism. Ariadne is sleeping 'between loves'. Andromeda is sleeping having just been freed by the man

<sup>151</sup> Curran 1966: 192.

<sup>152</sup> As noted by both Curran 1966: 194-195 and Breed 2003: 36-37.

<sup>153</sup> Curran 1966: 197 points out the erotic connotations of the term *accubuit*; Propertius is perhaps conflating the image of Andromeda sleeping having been freed with the 'first sleep' of the wedding night. Curran adduces several other occasions in Propertius where its usage is undoubtedly sexual.

<sup>154</sup> While the rituals of the cult of Bacchus are obscure, erotic overtones are apparent in ancient sources, from Pentheus' suspicions of sexual impropriety in Euripides' *Bacchae* to the frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii. See Launderville 2010: 152-153.

<sup>155</sup> Lyne 1980: 84 suggests that Propertius presents a series of 'stills' rather than a continuous 'film'.

<sup>156</sup> We can recall, again, our discoveries in Chapter II, particularly with regard to the comments of Mulvey 1975 and the role of the woman as the object of the man's erotic gaze.

<sup>157</sup> Tatham 2000: 47-48.

whom she will marry. The maenad is utterly exhausted – *fessa* – having just partaken in an ecstatic (and presumably erotic) ritual. Each scene brings the eroticism into deeper relief. Moreover, these snapshots capture the quiet moment in the wider mythological narrative, the ‘off-stage’ moment between acts.<sup>158</sup> When Propertius sets his eyes on Cynthia (7-8), there is no doubt that his gaze is amorous, referring as it does to the erotic images described before: *talis uisa mihi... / Cynthia....* All this has been established within eight lines, but the succession of images creates a vivid impression sufficient to place the reader in the scene and to induce an emotive response. This continues in the couplet describing Cynthia herself. She is breathing quietly, and rests her head on her unsteady hands.

In forming his mental picture of Cynthia, the reader would have been assisted by knowledge of contemporary art. Propertius’ mythological exempla are all the more apt for this reason. Each woman is a known subject in extant art, be it painting or sculpture. The poem’s invitation to gaze on these women in an erotic manner mimics the treatment each receives in plastic art and in painting. There are a number of extant artworks, both painting and sculpture, that depict the exempla. I would not go as far as some and suggest specific models on which Propertius’ descriptions are based, but it is likely that he did have types in mind; the debt is no smaller for being general. In any case, Propertius *must* be calling on the reader’s own personal knowledge of Hellenistic and contemporary art. His description of Andromeda asleep having just been freed from the rocks that held her is not as common a subject in extant painting and sculpture: most examples depict Andromeda chained or in the process of being freed by Perseus.<sup>159</sup> There are three, however, that depict Andromeda in a seated pose,<sup>160</sup> one of which has a definite erotic appeal.<sup>161</sup> There are none that show Andromeda lying down. It is noteworthy that all three pieces are

<sup>158</sup> This sort of moment is a particular favourite with ancient artists, especially Hellenistic ones. Take for example the seated Terme Boxer (Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome at Terme), resting after a bout, complete with bruises, cauliflower ears and an exhausted expression. The sculptor has focused on evoking the post-match ethos rather than the adrenaline and physicality of the bout itself. See Arenas 1999: 121 for an interesting discussion of the boxer’s presentation. Likewise, the Farnese Heracles (Museo Nazionale, Naples), when seen from the front appears exhausted, body and mind worn out from his labours. It is not until the viewer sees him from the back that the apples of the Hesperides are noticed; Heracles’ exhaustion for a time obscures the signs of immortal reward (see Zanker 2004: 94-95). For an earlier example of a similar effect, the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia depict Heracles after the killing of the Nemean Lion, another quiet moment evocative of the quieter psychological state.

<sup>159</sup> The most famous of these, a fresco from the Casa dei Dioscuri at Pompeii (9.6-7), is erotic: Andromeda’s breast is exposed (Richardson 1955: pl. 53, *LIMC* 1.2, ‘Andromeda I’: il. 69).

<sup>160</sup> *LIMC* 1.2, ‘Andromeda I’: ill. 97 and 104; *LIMC* Suppl. 2, ‘Andromeda I’: il. add.16.

<sup>161</sup> *LIMC* 1.2, ‘Andromeda I’: il. 104.

Hellenistic or Roman in origin. The erotic embrace in the Roman wall painting, and Andromeda's nude torso, are reminiscent of Propertius' sensuous imagery, although the link is tenuous at best.

We are on much more solid ground with the Ariadne descriptions. Goold's Loeb edition suggests a visual artwork model for 1.3's Cynthia.<sup>162</sup> His very brief analysis supports a painting as a precedent for the image of Ariadne sleeping on the shore. The alternative, a sculpture similar to the Sleeping Ariadne at the Vatican, is discounted because of the inclusion in Propertius' account of Theseus' ship receding into the horizon. The presence of the ship is not necessarily a precondition to finding an artistic inspiration for Propertius' account. In any case, Propertius tells a narrative in his snapshot image by including a reference to Theseus' ship. Nevertheless, Propertius' description matches extant paintings of Ariadne, particularly those from or inspired by the Hellenistic period. Three extant paintings depict her awake, with the ship in the background.<sup>163</sup> Only one has Ariadne sleeping,<sup>164</sup> but it is closely linked to Propertius' version: she is nude, stretched out on her side with her buttocks visible. The scene is clearly erotic, and shows both Theseus' ship departing and the arrival of Bacchus and his band. A painting such as this may well have formed an artistic model as suggested by Goold. Similarly, the Sleeping Maenad Fresco from the House of the Citharist in Pompeii suggests that the image of an exhausted maenad sprawled out on the ground after ecstatic dancing was a known subject in Roman art.<sup>165</sup> In this painting, the maenad lies on her back, breasts exposed, with an arm stretched across her head, which is tilted back.<sup>166</sup> A tambourine and a thyrsus are on the grass alongside her, and two other figures look on. Again, we are able to draw parallels between the visual artwork and the static image described by Propertius.

When Propertius finally approaches the sleeping Cynthia, the reader is treated to another series of vivid and highly pictorial descriptions, all of which resonate with contemporary visual art and which have erotic connotations.<sup>167</sup> The attempted embrace (15-16) describes the positioning of Propertius' arms, at which point he

<sup>162</sup> Goold 1990: 48-49.

<sup>163</sup> LIMC 3.2 add., 'Ariadne': ill. 80, 82 and 89 (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Inv. 9046).

<sup>164</sup> LIMC 3.2 add., 'Ariadne': il. 89 (Pompeii (VI.15.1), House of the Vettii).

<sup>165</sup> LIMC 1.2, 'Antiope I': il. 9 (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Inv. 112283).

<sup>166</sup> An upper-body pose not unlike that of one of the most striking examples of the eroticised sleeper, the Barberini Faun (Glyptothek, Munich, Inv. 218).

<sup>167</sup> Curran 1966: 198-199 singles out the phrase *admota manu* as an overtly sexual one given the context.

freezes. We have looked at the importance of the eyes in Propertius' erotic poetry. It is worthwhile revisiting this topic with regard to 1.3 and its interplay with visual art. Fear grips Propertius and he stands transfixed with his eyes locked on Cynthia, as if he were Argus looking on Io (19-20). Goold again draws our attention to the artistic precedent, a painting by Nicias, a copy of which was found in the House of Livia on the Palatine.<sup>168</sup> And, in terms of subject-matter, no better comparison could exist than that of thousand-eyed Argus.

Breed has considered the treatment of works of art, suggesting that 1.3 employs 'a distinct textual mode of evoking the visual, namely the *ekphrasis* in poetry of a work of visual art'.<sup>169</sup> This textual 'mode of evocation' could perhaps be described as the pursuit of *enargeia*, for it seems that this is the effect that Breed is trying to identify. He focuses on the stillness – *quies* – of the three exempla, noting how the descriptions of Cynthia also correlate with this quality.<sup>170</sup> To quote Breed's analysis:<sup>171</sup>

As projected by the poet's descriptions Cynthia and the heroines are visual objects, things to be looked at and admired. This is precisely what the narrator says he was doing: *talis uisa mihi mollem spirare quietem / Cynthia* (7-8)... Propertius' readers are consequently also encouraged to visualise Cynthia in their mind's eye.

Yet Breed does not complete his argument through reference to *enargeia*. Instead, he is content to establish the references to visual art before moving on to discuss the significance of such a description in forming the generic conception of the 'Elegiac Woman'.<sup>172</sup> Indeed, Breed avoids any discussion of *enargeia* despite his conclusion pointing towards such an undertaking. I would, therefore, like to extend Breed's analysis to include *enargeia*.

Let us return to Dionysius of Halicarnassus' definition of *enargeia* (*Lys.* 7). The orator Lysias, who employs *enargeia* successfully, leaves his audience in no doubt; 'nobody who applies his mind...will be so obtuse, insensitive or slow-witted that he will not feel that he can see the actions which are being described going on

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<sup>168</sup> Goold 1990: 51.

<sup>169</sup> Breed 2003: 35. We saw in the Introduction that the modern usage of the term *ekphrasis* is problematic.

<sup>170</sup> Breed 2003: 37.

<sup>171</sup> Breed 2003: 37.

<sup>172</sup> Breed 2003: 37.



and that he is meeting face-to-face the characters...' (trans. Usher). The reader of 1.3 is also able to 'see' the images described, visualising Ariadne, Andromeda, the maenad, and Cynthia in his or her mind's eye. If we turn now to Ps.-Demetrius (*Eloc.* 217), we recall that 'description of the attendant circumstances of an action can result in [*enargeia*]'.<sup>173</sup> Our exemplars and Cynthia are tired or worn out, and are linked through the repetition of words similar to *quies*. Each exemplar also incorporates details that relate to such attendant circumstances: Theseus' ship sails away while Ariadne lies on the empty shore, Andromeda sleeps having been unchained from the rocks, and the maenad is exhausted after ecstatic dancing. The couplet describing Cynthia lacks any background context, although a description of her posture is given.<sup>174</sup> The reader does know that Cynthia at the very least resembles these exemplars (*talis uisa mihi*); supplementation could perhaps add an appropriate set of attendant circumstances. Thus, Propertius' description not only matches Ps.-Demetrius' take on *enargeia* by including suitable circumstantial details for the mythological references, it is also comparable to Quintilian's assessment of Cicero's *enargeia* in the *Verrines*, where the reader ends up visualising the scene in more detail than is actually given. This sort of supplementation can only work if the reader is presented with a sufficiently vivid evocation of the overall scene to fill in the blanks accurately. By setting the tone with the mythological exemplars and by varying the ways in which he creates *enargeia*, it is open to us to conclude that Propertius begins 1.3 in a way designed to arrest the mind's eye.

*Elegy* 1.3 continues to provide striking examples of *enargeia*. We have noted how Propertius stood transfixed, fearful that Cynthia may wake. Special attention is paid to the folds of Cynthia's drapery; apples placed on her lap fall out of the pockets of fabric created by her position (23-26). He also delights in arranging her hair (21-22). These two actions return us to the image of the sleeping Cynthia, and the reader appreciates her as an object of plastic art, both drapery and hairstyle being significant aspects of a sculpture's overall aesthetic, and in shifting and adjusting these

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<sup>173</sup> Zanker 1981: 298.

<sup>174</sup> The effect of limiting the detail of Cynthia's bedchamber is no doubt intentional, a deliberate contrast between the scene-setting of the mythological exempla and the ordinary, everyday surroundings in which Propertius encounters his sleeping beauty. This at once ennoble the mythological references, granting them the privilege of details and at the same time leaves it to the reader to fill in the bedroom's décor. Those things which are mentioned (the window, the lyre, and the spindle) contribute directly to the narrative, making them all the more conspicuous in the reader's mental image of the room.

Propertius himself becomes a visual artist. Several scholars have explored the ‘image-making’ of this technique and particularly the role it plays in creating Cynthia as *objet d’art*. On a general level, Zanker has identified the visual appreciation of something in poetry as inviting a ‘viewer’ (who is actually a ‘reader’) to respond.<sup>175</sup> We have touched on aspects of his work on modes of viewing, and these again prove useful in the analysis of 1.3. So we have, in these vivid details, an invitation to the reader to adopt the position of viewer and, furthermore, to do so with a critical eye, for Propertius directs us to aspects of Cynthia’s sleeping body that would so interest a sculptor or painter, or an art critic.

When the moonbeam dances across the room (31-33), Cynthia is roused from her sleep and the bedroom is lit up. This play of light and dark is of course a cornerstone of visual art. Pliny the Elder describes a similar effect created by the painter Antiphilus (*NH* 35.40). In this painting, a boy blows on a fire, which then illuminates the apartment he is in. Propertius recreates this in 1.3, but, again, no detail of the room is given. All we know is that the light is sufficiently bright to wake up Cynthia as it passes across the room. It is up to the reader to picture what the bedroom would look like; ordinary experience would assist the reader in visualising the effect described. This focus on light and shade appears in a more erotic context in Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* twice, at 3.756-759 and 4.167-170, where two extended comparisons are made. The first describes the palpitations of Medea’s heart as she lay awake in bed thinking of Jason; her heart’s fluttering is like a sunbeam glancing off water in a bucket, flickering across the walls of a house. The second, more erotic still and all the more apt, reminds us of Propertius’ description:

ὥς δὲ σεληναίης διχομήνιδα παρθένος αἴγλην  
 ὑψόθεν ἐξανέχουσιν ὑπωροφίου θαλάμοιο  
 λεπταλέῳ ἐανῶ ὑποίσχεται, ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ  
 χαίρει δερκομένης καλὸν σέλας... (Ap. Rh. *Arg.* 4.167-170)

As when a young girl catches in her fine dress the gleam of the full moon hanging high over her bedroom under the roof, and her heart is delighted at the sight of the lovely radiance...  
 (trans. Hunter)

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<sup>175</sup> See generally Zanker 2004.

Apollonius shows both an artistic and a scientific interest in the movement and effect of light in a room. The aesthetic awareness of this passage would no doubt have inspired Propertius to explore the same effect. But when Cynthia wakes from the moonbeam, rather than expressing delight, she sits propped up on the bed to chastise Propertius, a variation befitting the elegiac topos of the *seruitium amoris*.<sup>176</sup> So Propertius' aesthetic awareness is drawn not just from his knowledge of contemporary art and its influences, but also from a tradition of Hellenistic literature that explores art and aesthetics in a similar way.<sup>177</sup> The other participant in this appreciation of artistic and literary awareness is of course the reader, who must also be able to picture in the mind's eye such scenes, and who would no doubt share a similar aesthetic appreciation.

Scholars have examined the effect of turning Cynthia into an *objet d'art*. Feminist scholarship has a special interest in this process. Sharrock's article on poetic sculpting – what she terms 'womanufacture' – is particularly enlightening. Although her interest is primarily 'in the power relations between the male artist and the female art-object',<sup>178</sup> her conclusions on the significance of the employment of art-imagery are also helpful for our purposes. She notes that the eroticism attached to descriptions of women can be read as both treating the woman in question as an object of desire and also of eroticising the idea of an art-object.<sup>179</sup> She also emphasizes how describing Cynthia using both references to contemporary art and the techniques of the sculptor encourages the reader to picture Cynthia as simultaneously a static artwork and an erotic vivification of it. The subtle wordplay between Cynthia and her comparands (Ariadne, Andromeda, and the maenad) confirm the art-object/love-object relationship she hypothesises.<sup>180</sup> Such a conclusion supports the contention that Propertius was indeed drawing on readers' funds of knowledge of contemporary artwork and directing them to apply this knowledge in an erotic, visually-aware manner. Moreover, the male gaze and objectification of the female form inherent in Sharrock's process of womanufacture reminds us of our findings in Chapter II, where Mulvey's analysis of gaze in Hollywood cinema was applicable to the work of Propertius and Tibullus. The construction of Cynthia as *objet d'art* and the eroticism

<sup>176</sup> On love as slavery in Propertius, see Maltby 2006: 156-158.

<sup>177</sup> Zanker 2004: 63 notes that it was the Hellenistic poets who first gave colour and light effects such extensive treatment.

<sup>178</sup> Sharrock 1991: 36.

<sup>179</sup> Sharrock 1991: 37.

<sup>180</sup> Sharrock 1991: 42.

connected to Propertius' male gaze as he comes across his lover asleep reinforces the male mode of viewing in 1.3.

How this fits into the prevailing conceptions of *ekphrasis* can be dealt with reasonably briefly. We should recall that, for the Imperial Rhetors, *anything* could form the subject of *ekphrasis*. It would therefore be better to focus on Propertius' pictorial vividness through *enargeia*. Zanker explains that *enargeia* can be described as one of the *aretai* of *ekphrasis*, noting that *ekphraseis* that display a vivid, pictorial attitude fit the formulaic definitions of ancient grammarians.<sup>181</sup> With this borne in mind, let us recapitulate our findings. *Elegy* 1.3 employs *enargeia* in a sophisticated way. First, it is an aim in itself. The vivid detailing brings to life the sleeping works of art in the opening lines. Secondly, it likewise turns the sleeping Cynthia into an *objet d'art*. Propertius essentially has it both ways, while the reader becomes both art critic and voyeur. Our wider knowledge of contemporary aesthetics (as with his original readership) thus informs our reception of Propertius' description of his sleeping beauty, and helps flesh out and colour our own personal appreciation of this poem.

We may now turn to one more example of Propertius' aesthetic criticism, this one more overt again than that featured in 1.3. In 2.31/32, Propertius takes a walk to the new portico of Apollo on the Palatine opened by Augustus in 28 BC. In an effort to explain to Cynthia why he is late, he treats the reader to a visually stunning description of the monument, replete with striking examples of *enargeia* and showing an awareness of the *technai* of the plastic arts:

tota erat in spatium Poenis digesta columnis,	3
inter quas Danaï femina turba senis.	
<.....>	
<.....>	
hic equidem Phoebō uisus mihi pulchrior ipso,	5
marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra;	
atque aram circum steterant armenta Myronis,	
quattuor, artificis uiuida signa, boues;	
tum medium claro surgebat marmore templum,	
uel patria Phoebō carius Ortygia.	10
in quo Solis erat supra fastigia currus,	

<sup>181</sup> Zanker 1981: 300-301; 2003: 59-60.

et ualuae Libyci nobile dentis opus:  
 altera deiectos Parnasi uertice Gallos,  
 altera maerebat funera Tantalidos.  
 deinde inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem      15  
 Pythius in longa carmina ueste sonat.      16      (Prop. 2.31.3-16)

The whole lot was arranged into an arcade by columns of Carthaginian marble, and between these was a crowd of women of old Danaus. ... This [the statue of Apollo] seemed to me more beautiful even than Phoebus himself, marble, gaping a song to a silent lyre; and four of Myron's cows had settled around the altar, living signs of their sculptor; then in the centre in sheer marble rose the temple, more precious to Phoebus than his Ortygian homeland. On this, above the pediment, was the Sun's chariot, and the doors a noble work of Libyan ivory: on the one side the Gauls, thrown down from atop Mt Parnassus, the other mourned the funerals of Niobe, daughter of Tantalus. And then there was the Pythian god himself, alongside his mother and his sister, singing songs in a long cloak.

Propertius begins by setting out the physical scale of the portico (3-4), referring to its approach and its space, and remarking on the columns' material (Carthaginian marble), complete with girls (actually sculptures of girls) in attendance. There follows a lacuna.<sup>182</sup> We then come to the statue of Apollo, with v. 6 mimicking Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* at v. 24.<sup>183</sup> Recalling 1.3 and Cynthia as a living *objet d'art*, the statue is described as being more beautiful than the god himself (5). Propertius is clearly making an aesthetic judgment, perhaps even a controversial one.<sup>184</sup> The very suggestion that a work of art could in fact trump 'real life' is wholly appropriate for our Augustan elegists: Propertius seems to have suggested as much when he has it both ways in 1.2;<sup>185</sup> Tibullus' own visual-verbal deception in 1.8 as Marathus gets ready to meet Pholoe also relates to art's ability to mislead and for others to reach false conclusions because of this.<sup>186</sup>

References to the statue itself and the four cows surrounding the altar reveal further intricacies to Propertius' aestheticism, and his interest in this instance in accurate description. For the Roman, it would be possible to visit the Palatine Apollo

<sup>182</sup> Heyworth 2007. Heyworth 1994: 58-59 makes his case for a missing couplet. He argues that, without some sort of reference to the Augustan Apollo, the comparison in 5-6 is difficult to place, given that *hic* could only then refer to Danaus in v. 4 or Caesar in v. 2, neither of which makes sense.

<sup>183</sup> See below, n. 188.

<sup>184</sup> On this, see Heyworth 1994: 57, who points out that the construction *equidem...uisus mihi* indicates a personal opinion (cf. *OLD* 'equidem' 1f, citing Var. *R.* 1.5.1).

<sup>185</sup> See above, p. 51.

<sup>186</sup> See above, p. 65.

and see for himself what all the fuss was about; it was therefore open to Propertius' audience to verify his claims. We have seen before how Propertius draws on specific or generic artistic precedents for his descriptions; here we have an excellent and explicit reference to a specific one.<sup>187</sup> The statue, apparently more beautiful than the 'reality' of Apollo's appearance stands 'gaping a song to a silent lyre' (*tacita carmen hiare lyra*). This is a striking description, making the sculpture almost come to life before the viewer's eyes, although the *tacita* reminds us that this is a representation and not the real thing. Nevertheless, such an image of a statue, mouth agape as if singing, with a silent lyre mimicking playing, must surely have had a powerful effect on the reader picturing this in his mind.<sup>188</sup> Likewise, the four cows that mill around the altar are 'living signs of the artist', who is no less than the Myron so celebrated elsewhere for the lifelike quality of his sculpture of a cow.<sup>189</sup> Propertius becomes one of these admirers. In these descriptions Propertius' *enargeia* allows the reader to picture in his mind these works of art that could then in fact be verified by his eyes.

The *boues* as *uiuida signa* are but one of several lifelike compositions at the Palatine Apollo that Propertius endows with living, feeling emotions.<sup>190</sup> He mentions, too, the doors depicting the defeated Gauls and the funerals of Niobe (13-14). The

<sup>187</sup> Others, too, have noted Propertius' eye for art. Hubbard 1974: 164-165 canvasses a number of examples, namely the dream of Cynthia drowning in 2.26, Calypso on the shore in 1.15, and the grotto and masks of 3.3.

<sup>188</sup> Heyworth 1994: 57 identifies a precedent in Callimachus, *Hymn* 2.24, where Callimachus describes a marble statue of a woman as if she were wailing: μάρμαρον ἀντὶ γυναικὸς οἷζυρόν τι χανούσης. Callimachus exhibits an interest in material with μάρμαρον, which Propertius repeats in v. 6 with *marmoreus*. The connection between Callimachus and Propertius here enhances Propertius' reputation as both learned and artistically savvy as well as strengthening the relationship between Propertian elegy and Hellenistic poetry.

<sup>189</sup> This may well be an allusion to Hellenistic epigram, where description of the verisimilitude of artwork was a common subject. For example, Myron's lifelike rendition of a heifer formed the subject of several epigrams (*Anth. Pal.* 9.713-742 and 793-798). Two particularly apt examples are 713:

Βοίδιον εἰμι Μύρωνος, ἐπὶ στήλης δ' ἀνάκειμαι.  
βουκόλε, κεντήσας εἰς ἀγέλην μ' ἄπαγε. (Anon.)

I am Myron's little heifer, set up on a base. Goad me, herdsman, and drive me off to the herd.  
(trans. Paton)

And, although written much later in the sixth century AD, 795:

Ἡ χαλκὸν ζώωσε Μύρων σοφός, ἢ τάχα πόρτιν  
χάλκωσε ζῶαν ἐξ ἀγέλας ἐρύας. (Julianus, Prefect of Egypt)

Skilled Myron either made the bronze alive or drove off a live heifer from the herd and made it into bronze. (trans. Paton)

<sup>190</sup> Welch 2005: 92 remarks on the absence of an overt simile (such as *ut*); the effect is to 'blur the distinction between what they are and what they are like'.

door is itself mourning (*maerebat* takes direct objects and personifies the door) the scenes it bears; the realism and vivacity of the artwork has been transferred to the building itself.<sup>191</sup> And when Propertius describes Apollo with his mother and sister, he is again singing (15-16). Propertius' study of the Palatine Apollo therefore relies heavily on *enargeia*. This is further reinforced by his scrupulous attention to detail: Apollo's statue and the temple of Ortygia are marble, the doors are ivory. The overall impression is vivid and visually splendid. Hubbard notes that '[t]he progression of the *ekphrasis* in 2.31 is significant not only as a linear tour of the temple-complex, but also as a series of exempla illustrating both the act of artistic representation and that of aesthetic perception'.<sup>192</sup> These exempla take the form of static shots of different pieces of art within the temple-complex and are illuminated by description in much the same way as Cynthia's comparanda were presented in 1.3. It is possible, then, to form our own picture of how Propertius has approached this description. He creates a series of static images, which are linked only by linear progression through the temple;<sup>193</sup> none of the pieces communicate with each other directly, although they all form part of an overall composition, with Propertius directing the reader-viewer's eye.

The descriptions themselves are compressed when compared to the sort of lengthy ones that might be expected of *enargeia*. While this is true, I consider that the combined effect of several snapshot-style descriptions is sufficient for the reader to form an accurate image in his mind's eye of the temple complex, and particularly the artwork therein. Propertius' contemporaries – his intended audience – would also be able to supplement the descriptions given with their own knowledge of the temple and its artwork.

Scholars have shown that the poem editors have traditionally labelled 2.32 is closely connected with the primarily 'ecphrastic' 2.31.<sup>194</sup> In 2.31/32, Propertius has two competing visual feasts: Cynthia and the Palatine Apollo. In lingering in Apollo's temple, eyes captivated by the stunning artwork, Propertius risks raising the ire of his beloved, who throughout Propertius' *oeuvre* is compared to an *objet d'art* that captures his eyes as well as the furtive gaze of others. In Chapter II, we discovered an attitude in Roman elegy towards the act of gazing that matched closely

<sup>191</sup> Welch 2005: 93 calls this 'a classic case of ekphrastic *enargeia*'.

<sup>192</sup> Hubbard 1984: 287.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Prop. 1.3.

<sup>194</sup> Heyworth's commentary includes a discussion of recent scholarly comment on this matter (2009: 246).

Mulvey's essay on the male gaze and female object in Hollywood cinema.<sup>195</sup> We have also seen how Propertius in 1.3 elevates Cynthia to the status of a living, breathing work of art. Now, after visiting the temple of Apollo and remarking on the captivating and realistic nature of the sculptures there, Cynthia's physical beauty is elided with what Propertius saw at the temple:

qui uidet, is peccat: qui te non uiderit, ergo  
non cupiet: facti lumina crimen habent. (Prop. 2.32.1-2)

He who sees, sins. He who hasn't seen will therefore not desire you: eyes bear the blame for actions.

This is a fitting statement from Propertius about the nature of his interaction with art and gaze. Scholars have noted the similarity to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*: ὃς μιν ἴδῃ, μέγας οὔτος, ὃς οὐκ ἴδε, λιτὸς ἐκεῖνος (2.10).<sup>196</sup> This lends further weight to the mirror-poem design of 2.31/32, with the description of the temple of Apollo in 2.31 being linked to Propertius' claim of innocence and the reversal of the accusation in 2.32.<sup>197</sup> Structurally, then, the *qui uidet, is peccat* couplet plays an important role.<sup>198</sup> In a similar vein, it has also been pointed out that the object of the gaze could just as equally be Apollo as Cynthia, another reinforcement of 2.31's and 2.32's relationship.<sup>199</sup>

Propertius suggests that Cynthia's motivation for her constant travelling is to escape his eyes: *non urbem, demens, lumina nostra fugis* (18). In doing so, she seems to disappear from Propertius' sight, presence and surveillance. Likewise, the excuses about visiting shrines out of interest in what is shown there (3-6; 9-10) hardly stand up to scrutiny; what Cynthia really wants is to be seen herself (7-9). Propertius is explicit in his melding of art, gaze, and *erōs*. We may now recall the opening lines of the *Monobiblos*, which set out the relationship between *lumina* and *Amor*, where Eros commands the *amator*'s eyes. This reading of the two poems makes the appeal to sight and the numerous references to visual artwork the keys to understanding the

<sup>195</sup> See above, p. 47.

<sup>196</sup> Welch 2005: 94.

<sup>197</sup> Propertius refers to Call. *Hymn* 2 in 2.31, too. See above, p. 82.

<sup>198</sup> Hubbard 1984: 282-283: '[2.31] constitute[s] an elaborate apology... This visual interest...is recapitulated and made the point of excuse with the expression *qui uidet, is peccat*'.

<sup>199</sup> Bowditch 2009: 412.



relationship between 2.31 and 2.32. Accordingly, we may classify 2.31/32 as mirror poems.<sup>200</sup> Propertius in 2.31 first defends his own lateness with a description of a captivating group of artworks (an innocent alibi), before in 2.32 holding the mirror up to Cynthia, his accuser, and asking what sort of (seedy) things she gets up to when out of sight.

### *Mimesis biou in Tibullus*

We have touched on depictions of everyday scenes and ‘low’ characters only sporadically thus far. These now call for fuller treatment and detailed analysis in order both to set them within their literary context and to explore how they manifest themselves in Roman elegy. The personal, intimate and sometimes bucolic nature of Roman elegy provides the ideal conditions in which the representation of the ordinary and the low can thrive. Moreover, *enargeia* and *mimesis biou* are linked by the immediacy they create. This section will explore Tibullus’ interest in everyday figures. In particular, I draw attention to two elegies, 1.10 and 2.1. Each is a worthy candidate for examination because of the strategic placement of *mimesis biou* in the overall structure of each poem, their intentions, and the level of detail incorporated into them. What emerges is for our purposes a twofold conclusion: first, Tibullus’ debt to Hellenistic poetry is substantial; secondly, vivid description – *enargeia* – both vivifies the scenes presented and helps link the vignettes to the overriding structure of each elegy.

I have chosen the expression *mimesis biou* – ‘imitation of life’ – to describe the sort of material Tibullus relates in those poems. The Alexandrian critic Aristophanes of Byzantium perhaps best expresses the idea of *mimesis biou* when he asked which of Menander and life imitated the other (Syrian. *Comment. in Hermog.* 2.23.6 Rabe).<sup>201</sup> I will be using *mimesis biou* in the context of descriptions of everyday, ordinary figures going about their business. The context I wish to explore is chiefly rural, but we shall see in Tibullus a sensitive handling of the distinction

<sup>200</sup> This sort of poetic diptych is not uncommon in Propertius; see, for example, 1.8A and 1.8B.

<sup>201</sup> ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἅρ’ ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο; For a more detailed historical account of the term *mimesis biou* and Aristophanes of Byzantium’s assessment of Menander see Pfeiffer 1968: 190-191. The term itself has its origins in descriptions of comedy, although Alcidas calls the *Odyssey* a ‘fair mirror of life’ (on this latter point, see also Pfeiffer 1968: 51).

between rural and urban *mimesis biou* as well. *Mimesis biou* occurs throughout ancient literature, but is most prominently found in the context of Hellenistic poetry.<sup>202</sup> The raising of secondary characters in traditional epic poetry (for example, the roles of Eumaeus and Philoetius in the *Odyssey*)<sup>203</sup> to the main focus was a notable feature of Hellenistic poetry. This was something already common in the works of Aristophanes and other comic dramatists, but Hellenistic poetry often presented traditionally low figures as serious studies in the grand genre of epic,<sup>204</sup> or made them the focal point of a narrative in place of the *spoudaioi* or, as Zanker defines it, ‘people of consequence’.<sup>205</sup> The parallel development in Hellenistic art of an artistic realism that depicted, for example, the elderly, the poor, and the drunk,<sup>206</sup> helps us to identify a specifically Hellenistic interest in such low subjects.

There are a number of examples in Hellenistic poetry of the sort of interest in everyday rural characters I will identify in Tibullus. Zanker remarks on how Theocritus’ description of the Goatherd’s Cup in *Idyll* 1 manages to cover a wide range of everyday life in the country: ‘childhood, caught up with its play; youth and its concern with love; and old age faced with the realities of work and making a living’.<sup>207</sup> The Cup’s description emphasizes the significance of the realistic, pictorial description of the fisherman (39-45) as exemplifying the sort of everyday people and activities that make up country life. Urban mime, such as Theocritus’ second *Idyll*, also provides a number of sketches of people engaged in everyday activity: there are Delphis and Eudamippus coming from the wrestling school (76-80), as well as references to neighbours (70-71), the lover waiting for his beloved outside a locked

<sup>202</sup> Webster’s discussion of the relationship between Hellenistic poetry and art (1964: 156-177, esp. 168-170) identified an interest in realism and the old, poor, and young in particular as subjects for both poetic and plastic art. See also Zanker 1987: chh. 5-6, where Zanker examines *mimesis biou* and realism in Hellenistic poetry in depth.

<sup>203</sup> This interest is most explicitly articulated in Theocritus, *Id.* 16.51-57, where, as Zanker 1987: 156 notes, ‘the list of persons and events in the *Odyssey* culminates with the swineherd Eumaeus and the neatherd Philoetius... Theocritus, then, is interested in the *phauloi* of the tradition, in particular those of the countryside’.

<sup>204</sup> See, for example, the proem to Callimachus’ *Aetia*, which deals with criticisms that he composed only a short tale which did not tell of kings and heroes (*Fr.* 1.3-6). See further Zanker 1987: 155.

<sup>205</sup> See, for example, the *Hecale*, where Callimachus describes Theseus sheltering from the rain in a way that gives his hostess, the old woman Hecale, not only the centre stage but also many of the traits attributed to the *phauloi*, whom Zanker defines as ‘people of little consequence’, of traditional epic as well as the more noble heroes and heroines. See further Zanker 1987: 209-213 who identifies, among others, Eumaeus, Eurycleia, Thetis, Hector, and Andromache as models for Hecale’s actions and words.

<sup>206</sup> A combination discussed by Zanker 2004: 155-157 in connection with the sculpture of the Drunken Old Woman (Glyptothek, Munich).

<sup>207</sup> Zanker 1987: 81.

door (127-128), and an erotic encounter with sympotic references to flute-players and unmixed wine (138-158). His attention to detail is evident in the descriptions of the play of light and colour (Daphnis' glistening skin and golden hair; 78-79), the physical effects of love (cold, sweat, hot flushes; 106-110,<sup>208</sup> 140-141), and clothing and drapery (72-73, 120-122). His imagery creates credible and detailed portraits of characters and their circumstances that can be visualised by the reader, who then sees what Simaetha sees. In this way, we can see how Theocritus brings about *enargeia*. *Idyll* 14 takes the form of a conversation between Aeschinas and Thyonichus, two non-elites,<sup>209</sup> where Aeschinas recounts a symposium among friends, some of whom were mercenaries and horse trainers. Burton suggests that this shows symposia in the Hellenistic period extended beyond social elites and encompassed many other socio-economic levels.<sup>210</sup> Accordingly, Theocritus' treatment in *Idyll* 14 of a non-elite symposium can be seen in the light of both social context and a growing aesthetic interest in the actions of everyday people. We shall see that Tibullus 1.10 in many ways takes its cue from Theocritus' rendering of everyday life. Further on, we shall also find that Callimachus' mimetic hymns serve as inspiration for the opening poem of Tibullus' second book.

Tibullus 1.10 stands out as a striking example of *mimesis biou* in Roman elegy. There has been scholarly comment on the relationship between 1.1 and 1.10 and the ordering of Tibullus' first book.<sup>211</sup> There is also some treatment of the topical innovations in the *militia amoris* theme of 1.10.<sup>212</sup> However, little scholarship exists that looks at the imagery from any angle other than to relate it to these two aspects. I propose to examine Tibullus 1.10 so that we may understand the significance of *enargeia* in the depiction of ordinary people as an aim in itself, and also see how precedents such as those in Theocritus' *Idylls* can serve as either direct or indirect influences on Tibullus' descriptive techniques.

1.10 is, as Murgatroyd notes, 'a description of the ideal existence which [Tibullus] would like to lead in contrast to the soldier's life which he is now [to] endure'.<sup>213</sup> The poem moves through several scenes – snapshot style – which describe in detail aspects of this peaceful life. Tibullus curses the inventor of the

<sup>208</sup> In which Theocritus employs a simile at v. 106, with Simaetha becoming cold as snow.

<sup>209</sup> Burton 1995: 25.

<sup>210</sup> Burton 1995: 25.

<sup>211</sup> See, for example, Boyd 1984.

<sup>212</sup> Murgatroyd 1975.

<sup>213</sup> Murgatroyd 1991: 278.

sword and declares that war is the result of man's greed (1-8). He is himself reluctantly off to war (11-14). This is not the sort of life Tibullus wants. It is better to be of humble means, living a simple rural lifestyle in which a shepherd sleeps with his sheep (9-10), in which Tibullus remembers being a child running around his Lares (16), and in which a young girl follows her farmer father with honeycomb when he goes to make an offering to the household gods (23-24).<sup>214</sup> There is a lacuna after line 25.<sup>215</sup> These references to ordinary activity pervade the first part of the poem, building up the thematic contrast between Pax and Mars. In particular, the contrast between the horrors of war and the time when Pax reigned over simple rustic lifestyles dominates the middle section of the poem (33-43). This in turn foreshadows Love's war – *militia amoris* – which appears towards the poem's end. Tibullus then expresses his wish to live like a poor farmer (*sic ego sim*; 43), who tends his flock with his son while his wife ensures hot water is ready for a well-earned bath:

quin potius laudandus hic est quem prole parata  
 occupat in parua pigra senecta casa?  
 ipse suas sectatur oues, at filius agnos,  
 et calidam fesso comparat uxor aquam. (Tib. 1.10.39-42)

But is he not more praiseworthy whom slow old age overtakes in a little cottage with children already at hand. He himself tends his own ewes, and his son the lambs, and the wife prepares the hot bath for her worn-out man.

This short vignette also exhibits a characteristic that will recur for the remainder of poem, namely reader supplementation. We are presented with a description that is, granted, only two couplets in size; nevertheless it is highly evocative and appeals to the mind's eye. What it does not do, however, is present the reader with a complete image; details are missing. It is possible to conjure an image of a simple *rusticus* who, after a day's work with his son among the flock, has returned home to his wife and a hot bath which she has prepared. We know that Tibullus regards such people as worthy of praise (39-40), so we have an emotional angle from which to appreciate the image. By the effort involved in filling in the details, the reader is engaged in this

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Murgatroyd 1991: 281, who refers to these 'charming touches' as excellent examples of the 'artistic simplicity' of 1.10.

<sup>215</sup> Maltby 2002: 347 suggests at least a pentameter and hexameter between vv. 25 and 26, possibly involving a 'thank-offering' to the Lares.

appreciation of the life of a simple rustic. Moreover, it is this sort of technique that emphasizes the connections with Hellenistic poetry.<sup>216</sup>

Another slice-of-life example of *mimesis biou* from the same poem is that of the inebriated farmer and his family:

rusticus e lucoque uehit, male sobrius ipse,  
uxorem plaustro progeniemque domum. (Tib. 1.10.51-52)

The rustic comes back home from the grove, himself scarcely sober, wife and children in the wagon with him.

Our *rusticus* returns home merrily (cf. Tib. 2.1.29-30) from some sort of religious rite (*e lucoque uehit*), his wife and children in the cart with him. The snapshots of country life culminate in this domestic scene. The short couplet is vivid enough to provide information and description necessary to form an accurate scene within the reader's mind and is the result of Tibullus' *enargeia*. It is sufficiently detailed pictorially, with images such as the *rusticus* driving his family home in the cart, for the reader to fill it out. Tibullus' judiciously sparing use of vivid description is apparent again.<sup>217</sup>

Until now, Tibullus has lamented the abuse of iron for martial purposes and championed the plough and agriculture. The *militia amoris* topos appears in lines 53-64, and the tone changes to a condemnation of those who get carried away with Love's war:

sed ueneris tunc bella calent, scissosque capillos      53  
femina, perfractas conqueriturque fores;  
flet teneras subtusa genas: sed uictor et ipse      55  
flet sibi dementes tam ualuisse manus.  
at lasciuus Amor rixae mala uerba ministrat,  
inter et iratum lentus utrumque sedet.  
a lapis est ferrumque, suam quicumque puellam  
uerberat: e caelo deripit ille deos.      60  
sit satis e membris tenuem rescindere uestem,  
sit satis ornatus dissoluisse comae,  
sit lacrimas mouisse satis: quater ille beatus  
quo tenera irato flere puella potest.      64 (Tib. 1.10.53-64)

<sup>216</sup> Zanker 2004: 73-102 has written at length on filling out the image in Hellenistic poetry.

<sup>217</sup> See above, p. 62.

But then Love's war ignites, and the woman bewails torn hair and smashed doors; she will weep for her bruised tender cheeks: but the victor himself will also weep that his maddened hands were so strong. Yet Amor, the little devil, sits stubborn between the two combatants, foul words fuelling the quarrel. Ah! he is stone and iron, whoever would strike his own girl: he hauls the gods down from heaven. It is enough to tear off the skimpy dress from her limbs, it is enough to tousle the neatly arranged hair, to move her to tears – that is enough: he is four-times blessed who with his anger can bring a tender girl to tears.

There is an argument between lovers, a violent encounter that causes both parties grief. None of this is uncommon in Roman elegy; such quarrels form the basis of the *militia amoris* topos.<sup>218</sup> Our interpretation of the *bella Veneris* changes significantly depending on our reading of the passage. Putnam, Murgatroyd and Maltby would have the *rusticus* and his *uxor* quarrel in the evening following their return from the festival, allowing Tibullus to show another side to country living, where a hard-hearted man perverts the tranquillity of rural Amor and Pax through the incursion of violence into a seemingly happy marriage.<sup>219</sup> Luck's editions, however, take *sed* in line 53 as beginning a new vignette; a line break is inserted after line 52 to emphasize this.<sup>220</sup> His text opens up the possibility of Tibullus characteristically changing tack, leaving the theme of rural peace and turning to topoi more suited to an urban elegiac setting, thereby using the contrasting vignettes to make clearer the merits of country life and love.<sup>221</sup> As we might expect in a passage on love and strife in the big city, we have the broken doorframe and *lasciuus Amor*, not to mention the use in lines 59 and 64 of *puella* instead of *uxor*. The *progenies* of line 52 drops out of the picture, too, something which also suggests a change in setting. It is certainly open for us to conclude that Tibullus has indeed changed tack, and that he is presenting next to his idyllic *mimesis biou* of rural love the harsh and violent realities of urban love and *militia*. In many ways, this reading is less challenging, and it sets up a clear distinction between rural peace and urban / martial discord.

<sup>218</sup> See, generally, Murgatroyd 1975.

<sup>219</sup> Indeed, Putnam 1973 punctuates the end of v. 52 with a comma, strongly suggesting that the lovers' quarrel is between the *rusticus* and his *uxor*.

<sup>220</sup> Luck 1964 also retains the conjectured lacuna before v. 51, which may well have fleshed out the details of the country festival the *rusticus* and his family attended, making it even easier to justify a scene-change at v. 53. Murgatroyd 1991: 325 on the other hand argues strongly against the need for such a lacuna, claiming that 'the present couplet makes perfectly good sense in itself and needs no further explanation... while in the middle of a passage in praise of Peace a longer ref. [sic] to a rustic festival (in honour of another deity) would be inappropriate'.

<sup>221</sup> I thank Graham Zanker for drawing my attention to this reading of the text.

The rural and urban lifestyles are contrasted over only a few couplets, but this does not necessarily prevent us from picturing the scene. As Pillinger notes, ‘Tibullus is sketching very rapidly here and allowing the reader to fill in the background for himself’.<sup>222</sup> So it is for the reader to supply the house which now has a broken door. Furthermore, the reader must also supply the argument, for he is presented only with the effects of whatever transpired between the man and his girl, namely torn hair, a broken door, and weeping on all sides. Compositionally, describing such a man as *lapis* and *ferrum* takes us back to the *ferus* and *ferreus* Tibullus uses in line 2 to describe him who first made *horrendos enses*.<sup>223</sup>

The lovers’ altercation is sandwiched between two addresses to Peace. The language of disharmony features strongly throughout: *bella* (53), *conqueritur* (54), *uictor* (55), *saeuus* and *scutum* (65). The *bella Veneris* passage therefore plays a significant role in shifting the tone and the direction of the elegy, moving from a hymn to Peace (45-50) to the final message, that those of ill temper should steer clear of love (65-66). Tibullus also includes an exhortation to peaceful resolution of lovers’ quarrels (63-64), presenting an alternative to the smashing of doors. The final couplet returns to Peace to whom Tibullus prays for plenty (67-68). The overall effect of this is to emphasize further the divide between *rus* and peace (and now also love) on the one hand, and *urbs* and war (and problematic urban love) on the other.

It is worthwhile taking time to describe the relationship between Tibullus 1.10 and Theocritus *Idyll* 7, which has two songs on country and city love, the latter with elements of strife.<sup>224</sup> In the first part of 1.10, we have the vivid descriptions of a young Tibullus at play, a daughter with her father participating in religious rites, the labour of a farmer and his desire for a hot bath, and a narrative passage on the interaction between a farmer and his family. This is comparable to the catalogue of rural activities described on the Goatherd’s Cup in Theocritus’ first *Idyll*.<sup>225</sup> More striking, however, is the similarity of the hymnal ending of 1.10 to the close of *Idyll* 7:

at nobis, Pax alma, ueni spicamque teneto,

<sup>222</sup> Pillinger 1971: 206.

<sup>223</sup> Lee 1990: xiii identifies a number of other clever verbal references that link the various passages of the poem.

<sup>224</sup> As has become apparent in our analysis, Tibullus incorporates a wide range of snapshot-style and narrative detail into his elegy. The ‘high’ themes of Love and War are set into a series of descriptions that could be described as, to borrow Zanker’s term for Theocritus’ *mimesis biou* in *Idyll* 1, ‘quotidian’ (1987: 81).

<sup>225</sup> See above, p. 87.

perfluat et pomis candidus ante sinus. (Tib. 1.10.67-68)

And so come to us, nourishing Peace, holding ears of corn, and from your shining-white lap  
let the fruit overflow.

οἶον δὴ τόκα πῶμα διεκράνασθε Νύμφαι  
βωμῷ παρ Δάματρος ἀλφάδος; ἅς ἐπὶ σωρῷ  
αὖθις ἐγὼ πάξαιμι μέγα πτύον, ἃ δὲ γέλασσαι  
δράγματα καὶ μάκωνας ἐν ἀμφοτέραισιν ἔχοισα. (Theoc. *Id.* 7.154-157)

...This was the wine, Nymphs,  
You mixed for us on that day, by the altar of Demeter,  
Queen of the threshing-floor. May I once again  
Plant the great winnowing-fan in her heap of grain,  
While she smiles, her hands laden with poppies and sheaves. (trans. Verity)

Tibullus' image of *Pax alma* and the cornucopia she bears has an obvious equivalent in Theocritus' Demeter. Indeed, there are a number of similarities between Tibullus 1.10 and *Idyll* 7. The contrast that Theocritus explores through the songs of Lycidas and Simichidas between countryside peace and problematic love is embedded in a wider hymn to Peace, which is itself linked in the final section to a bucolic twist on sympotic<sup>226</sup> settings (131-154). Simichidas' song laments the trials and tribulations of unreciprocated love; Philinus seems impervious to Aratus' advances. The revelation at line 122 that Simichidas and Aratus have been waiting outside Philinus' door introduces a comastic aspect to the song, which gives it a decidedly urban feel.<sup>227</sup>

In his poem, Tibullus first praises the tranquil peace of the countryside, mentioning both everyday activities and religious observances, before introducing a contrasting tale of urban love and strife and finally concluding with a hymn to peace. While *Idyll* 7 also contains sympotic elements absent from 1.10 (notably in the song of Lycidas: vv. 52-89), and 1.10 likewise addresses a wider theme of love versus war, these differences do not prevent us from appreciating what similarities there are. There is a real possibility, never before identified as far as I know, that Tibullus has shaped his poem in part after a Hellenistic model. If this is so, Tibullus has drawn the

<sup>226</sup> A symposium takes place at vv. 132-147 in a rural setting.

<sup>227</sup> Cairns 1972: 201-203.



contrast of problematic love and countryside peace more sharply than happens in *Idyll* 7, and the vivid description of Pax is given added point.

It is evident that in 1.10 Tibullus displays a highly developed sense of pictorialism. This is also true for 2.1, which contains a similar vignette. The Hellenistic overtones are also apparent. The reader becomes a spectator to a rural community's religious rites. A community celebration provides an opportunity for Tibullus to 'zoom in' on rural lifestyle, one which, in the progress of these religious rites, although a public affair, returns again and again to the household imagery. Although speaking of tenant-farmers and full fields (21),<sup>228</sup> the closeness of description suggests that this is a smallish gathering of local farmers. The references to what appear to be smaller, local deities as well as Ceres, Bacchus and Venus supports this point.<sup>229</sup> Tibullus takes on the role of a poet-priest in the ensuing descriptions, and his invocations to look upon what is happening address the audience directly and involve them in the proceedings.<sup>230</sup> Our viewpoint contributes to the overall sense of community that Tibullus relates. We are directed to the crowd amassing behind the sacrificial lamb, and then to the farmer and the farmhands at the bonfire, each description focusing on the small and compressed actions of individuals during moments of time in a significant festival:

cernite, fulgentes ut eat sacer agnus ad aras	15	
uinctaque post olea candida turba comas.	16	
...		
tunc nitidus plenis confisus rusticus agris	21	
ingeret ardenti grandia ligna foco,		
turbaque uernarum, saturi bona signa coloni,		
ludet et ex uirgis extruet ante casas.		
euentura precor: uiden ut felicibus extis	25	
significet placidos nuntia fibra deos?	26	(Tib. 2.1.15-16, 21-26)

See, the sacred lamb goes to the gleaming altar and the white-cloaked crowd following after, hair wreathed with olive... then the happy and healthy farmer confident in his full fields will pile the large logs on the blazing fire, and gaggle of servants' children, signs of their master's

<sup>228</sup> Murgatroyd 1994: 19 notes that many fields do not necessarily defeat the concept of a 'small' farming estate.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *di patrii* (17), which may refer to traditional family Lares, *rurisque deos* (37), which may refer to local agricultural deities, and *Laribus* (60), in connection with ages past.

<sup>230</sup> Putnam 1973: 153.

wealth, will play around it and construct little houses of sticks. I pray these things will happen: see how the prophetic liver promises the gods' pleasure from the favourable entrails?

The reader is included in the imperative *cernite* and his view is tightly controlled, something which emphasizes the minutiae of detail and keeps the setting compact. The same can be said of *uiden*. It also reflects a common topos of Hellenistic epigram and mime, where the reader is often instructed to look upon something, which we will examine more deeply below.<sup>231</sup> The reader therefore becomes part of the assembled audience and the instructions Tibullus as poet-priest gives apply equally to him as to the imagined crowd of rustics.<sup>232</sup> Silence is requested: *quisquis adest, faueat* (1; note the jussive subjunctive). Those who had sex the night before must also depart (11-12; the command is given by *iubeo*). The crowd follows the passage of the lamb to the altar (15-16), again confining our experience of the scene to a small space. The *tunc* carries the reader forward in time, possibly beyond the festival itself,<sup>233</sup> to the thank-offering that will occur following the (hopefully) full harvest that ensues. The *rusticus* will pile high his fire (21-24). Our gaze is again kept within bounds: the elemental fire is bordered by young servants, who build small huts from twigs (*ex uirgis extruet...casas*). The servants' games signify a happy household; our focus turns from the public sacrifice to the personal, domestic sphere.

There are, as we might expect, Hellenistic and earlier Roman precursors to this sort of work. This mimetic dramatisation of religious rites can be found in Callimachus' second, fifth and sixth *Hymns*, as well as in Catullus' longer poems, 61 and 62. As we noted above, Tibullus as poet-priest instructs the reader. The same sort of master-of-ceremonies approach can be found in Callimachus.<sup>234</sup> In *Hymn 2*, for example, there are several requests that apply to the reader as much as the audience within the poem; I place them side-by-side with similar passages from Tibullus:

<sup>231</sup> See, for example, the directives given to look at something in Theoc. *Id.* 15 at vv. 13, 51, 53, 55, 69, 78, and 95, the last one actually being a call for silence.

<sup>232</sup> Zanker 2004: 33, 115-118 marks out this technique of 'audience integration' as a key part of the Hellenistic repertoire. In particular, he identifies Callimachus' mimetic hymns (esp. *Hymn 2*, to Apollo) as prime examples.

<sup>233</sup> Murgatroyd 1994: 32-33. The jump forward in time need not, however, be so far in the future as the completion of the harvest itself; it may be that Tibullus is merely taking the reader to the conclusion of the festival and the revelry that ensues. The farmer's confidence (expressed in *nitidus* - 'shining' or 'gleaming' as in 'happy and healthy' or even 'assured' in the sense of 'flourishing') and full fields are thus mentioned in confident anticipation of wish-fulfilment.

<sup>234</sup> Cairns 1979: 121 disagrees, arguing instead that *Hymn 2* is actually a choric hymn.

ἐκάς, ἐκάς ὅστις ἀλιτρός (2.2)	<i>uos quoque abesse procul iubeo, discedat ab aris, cui tulit hesternae gaudia nocte Venus</i> <sup>235</sup>
Let whoever is sinful go far away	(2.1.11-12)
	I order all you whom Venus gave joy last night to stand apart and stay away from the altar
οὐχ ὁράας (2.4)	<i>cernite and uiden</i> (2.1.15, 25)
Do you not see?	See / look
εὐφημεῖτ' (2.17)	<i>quisquis adest, faueat</i> (2.1.1)
Keep auspicious silence	Whoever is here, may he keep silence

In particular, the instructions to look on the actions (*cernite* and *uiden*) are placed at opportune points in the proceedings, with *uiden* refocusing the reader's attention after the lamb is sacrificed and the haruspex declares a favourable omen.

There are numerous other structural similarities, which clearly align 2.1 with Hellenistic mimetic hymns; these have been examined at length by other scholars.<sup>236</sup> But it is these verbal concordances that emphasize first reader involvement in the scene and secondly the importance of visualising in the mind's eye the activities of the ritual. Callimachus' *Hymns* also contain numerous aural appeals through references to song or chanting (2.25, 2.80; 5.139; 6.2; 6.17, 6.118) and listening (2.17, 2.97; 5.3, 5.14), something which Tibullus also includes (2.1.1, 37, 83-86). Although our interest is primarily in the visual cues Tibullus uses to give vividness to the poem, the overall sensory impact is considerable, and must be taken into account. The reader is commanded directly again at the end of the poem, with the striking construction –

*uos celebrem cantata deum pecorique uocate:  
uoce palam pecori, clam sibi quisque uocet...* (Tib. 2.1.83-84)

<sup>235</sup> Tibullus' take on Callimachus' call for the impure to depart makes an explicit reference to love, something which befits a mimetic hymn composed by a love poet.

<sup>236</sup> See Cairns 1979: 128-130.

Sing of the wondrous god and call him to the fold: let anyone call him to the herd aloud,  
silently to himself...

– before the sound of the pipes drown out the words (86). We have moved some way from merely seeing pictures; the reader has now without a doubt become one of the assembled participants in the sacred rites. But as we have seen in both Propertius and Tibullus, appeals to sight, which are crucial elements of *enargeia*, are incorporated into a wider passage of vivid description. The reader's ability to visualise what is being described is therefore enhanced by the appeal to sight as much as the vivid description brings out the broader sensory experience of reader integration. We are also able to identify how Hellenistic literature – in this case, the mimetic hymns of Callimachus – influenced the composition of the poem and presentation of the themes.

There are also, as expected, a number of differences between Tibullus 2.1 and Callimachus' mimetic *Hymns*. In 2.1, Tibullus' focus lacks the public-mindedness that can be found in Callimachus. For example, Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* contains several references to public construction (55) and the value of Apollo to life in the *polis* (32-42). This befits such a public religious observance. Tibullus' poetry is more personal: in turning to the domestic activities of farmers, a public religious observance is strangely lacking in public detail. Instead, the simple activities of happy farmers and servants become the focal point of the audience's wishes. And when Messalla makes his appearance, and is duly toasted, the brief geographical catalogue ends with a return to humble fields (Tib. 2.1.31-36), and an explicit, short *recusatio*-like statement by Tibullus: *rura cano rurisque deos* (37). So Tibullus sidesteps the vast scale of Messalla's triumphs,<sup>237</sup> returning again to the more intimate matter of the civilisation of mankind and the rural origins of the gods (38-90).<sup>238</sup> The little huts of the servants' games return: this time, though, they are the modest shelters the gods taught to the ancients:

<sup>237</sup> Cairns 1979: 130-132 makes several additional points concerning Messalla's involvement in 2.1. Since he was a Frater Arvalis, a toast to him in an Ambarvalia-like festival is in some ways wholly appropriate. He also takes the place of the king of Callimachus' second *Hymn* (v. 26); Cameron 1995: 408-409 suggests that the king in question is actually the Cyrenean king Magas and not a Ptolemy. Furthermore, the mention of military triumph, while in passing and likely programmatic as a *recusatio*, fits neatly with the Ambarvalia hypothesis as Mars in this capacity is god of agriculture.

<sup>238</sup> The poetic statement made by the *recusatio* is not lost, either. Just as in 1.1, Tibullus opens his second book with a programmatic rejection of the theme of public affairs.

illi compositis primum docuere tigillis  
exiguam viridi fronde operire domum... (Tib. 2.1.39-40)

[The country gods] first taught men in arranging joists and to cover a little house with green thatch...

The rural gods and local deities honoured alongside Ceres and Bacchus are also mentioned again: a country child (*rure puer*) long ago was the first to weave a floral crown for the ancient Lares (*antiquis Laribus*; 59-60). The distant past is thus related to the festivities of the present. Tibullus capitalises on the humble simplicity of the rural rites by linking them with this nostalgia, going so far as to suggest an action for the lustration, much in the same way the Callimachus diverts from the ceremony in his mimetic hymns to discuss some mythological origin for the rites he describes (for example, *Hymn* 2.60-93). Not only has Tibullus successfully incorporated an extended vignette into his already intricate evocation of a rural festival, but he has also been able to do so in a highly pictorial style, weaving together visual imagery and rural setting to create an effective foil to more dramatic, public-minded matters that attempt to infiltrate his peaceful rural world.

One thing that Tibullus cannot shut out of his rural idyll is love. Indeed, we are reminded that Cupid was in fact born in the countryside, and it was there that he learnt his craft (67-70). This digression towards the end of the poem (from lines 67 to 80) is, in the light of our discoveries in 1.10, a characteristic turn for a subjective love poet. The switch from Cupid, blissfully toying with his arrows in the fields, to the disharmony of urban love, effectively picks up where 1.10 left off, something which makes for a striking continuity between the final poem of Tibullus' first book and the opening one of his second. Yet again, the urban erotic experience is full of heated emotions, with men old enough to know better swearing outside a shut door while youths part with money to woo girls, and women sneak out of the house to conduct illicit affairs (75-78). In one more example of Tibullus' clever use of sight to complete or enhance a description, we are left with the image of a furtive adulteress, blind with hand outstretched exploring the path before her: *explorat caecas cui manus ante uias*. The only one happy in love is one whom love touches gently (79-80). As we have noted above, the poem ends with a call to Cupid to return to the fold,<sup>239</sup> *sans*

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<sup>239</sup> See above, p. 96.

arrows (81-86) before, in a final vivid, visual image, golden stars and black dreams bring the festival, the revellers, and the poem to a close (86-91).

In both 1.10 and 2.1, therefore, Tibullus asks the reader to picture ordinary, everyday farming characters engaged in ordinary, everyday events and activities. The vivid snapshot approach to 1.10 is characteristic of Roman elegy, but has its origins in the detailed description of *mimesis biou* found in Hellenistic poetry. Tibullus' interest in low characters and rural life is combined with his thematic interest in the interaction between Mars and Pax, contributing to the overall structure of the poem. Likewise, 2.1 is dominated by the description of the lustrations. The reader follows the action, indeed is integrated into the scene, all the while being treated to pictorial details that tell of rustics and their households celebrating the sacred event. This blend of reader integration in a vivid domestic scene with *mimesis biou* is of central importance to the overall impetus of this poem. The Hellenistic connections are also apparent. There are striking echoes of Callimachus, and there are also techniques that can be generally classified as Hellenistic. Vivid description, aetiology, an interest in low characters, reader integration and skilful incorporation of topoi provide evidence of this. We may conclude that Tibullus' narrative passages and his examples of *mimesis biou* are Hellenistic in inspiration and that, as expected, visualisation and *enargeia* are major aspects of these.

## ***Conclusion***

By examining two different aspects of the poetry of Propertius and Tibullus we have seen how these poets incorporate *enargeia* in ways that reflect their own poetic interests. Propertius' special interest in the language and techniques of artists and artisans highlight the close interplay between poetry and art. Verbal descriptions of what he sees display striking similarities with contemporary and Hellenistic art. Similarly, his frequent displays of a knowledge of and interest in the *technai* of the visual arts introduces a sophisticated, aesthetic angle to his descriptions. The reader is therefore rewarded for his own aesthetic and artistic awareness: knowledge of contemporary Roman art and its Hellenistic origins is most certainly recommended, if not expected. This befits poetry written in an allusive style for a learned audience. And when Cynthia herself becomes an erotic work of art we are confronted with the

ultimate example of male gaze and female love-object. The Palatine Apollo is a testament to Propertius' *enargeia*, which combines detail upon detail so that the reader is taken on a vividly-imagined tour of the temple complex.

Tibullus' *mimesis biou* in 1.10 and 2.1 is replete with striking imagery, which often places the reader in the scene and employs a wide range of descriptive techniques. In particular, Tibullus in 1.10 seamlessly knits together a number of small vignettes to evoke rural peace. He then sets up a striking contrast, in the manner of Theocritus' seventh *Idyll*, between this rural peace and the problems of a distinctly urban love, with Amor the instigator fuelling violent and angry quarrels. In 2.1, the gathering of rustics for a religious observance closely follows the sort of mimetic hymns composed by Callimachus, where the reader is completely integrated into the scene and Tibullus takes on the role of a poet-priest, leading the procession and controlling what the reader sees. So we can conclude that Tibullus is also a skilful exponent of *enargeia*, evoking scenes that the reader is able to picture in his mind's eye.

Finally, we can bring together the numerous references to and borrowings from Hellenistic literature. In particular, Callimachus, Theocritus and Apollonius are all notable influences on Propertian and Tibullan elegy. Hellenistic poetry and art both provide exempla from which our poets draw. Roman elegy represents an extension of many Hellenistic literary precedents, in a way that emphasizes the personal and erotic aspects. Visualisation and *enargeia* therefore manifest themselves differently in each poet's *oeuvre*, but each version is nonetheless striking in its own way.

## Envoi

### *Synaesthesia in Propertius*

In Goethe's fifth *Roman Elegy*, the German tips his hat to his elegiac inspirations, the poets Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid – the *Triumvirn*. Goethe spends his days absorbing the culture of ancient Rome and his nights in love. His account of these nights shed light on the sensual, synaesthetic nature of description in Roman elegy:

Aber die Nächte hindurch hält Amor mich anders beschäftigt,  
 Werd' ich auch halb nur gelehrt, bin ich doch doppelt vergnügt.  
 Und belehr' ich mich nicht? wenn ich des lieblichen Busens  
 Formen spähe, die Hand leite die Hüften hinab.  
 Dann versteh' ich erst recht den Marmor, ich denk' und vergleiche,  
 Sehe mit fühlendem Aug', fühle mit sehender Hand. (*Roman Elegy* 5.5-10)

But at night Love keeps me busy another way;  
 I become half a scholar but twice as contented.  
 And am I not learning, studying the shape  
 Of her lovely breasts, guiding my hand down her hips?  
 Then I know marble more: thinking, comparing,  
 See with a feeling eye: feel with a seeing hand. (trans. Kline, with  
modifications)

Goethe's romantic liaisons recall those of Propertius, appealing to the senses and demonstrating awareness of contemporary art. His sensual description exhibits some striking features: when he caresses his beloved, her form helps him understand marble sculpture; the nexus between art and *erōs* is not dissimilar to Propertius' description of Cynthia in 1.3. This culminates in the expressions *mit fühlendem Aug'* and *mit sehender Hand* – 'with a feeling eye' and 'with a seeing hand'. Goethe transposes the sensory qualities of one to the other, so it is the eye that feels and the hand that sees. He is clearly inspired by the Augustan elegists, so we might expect to find examples of this synaesthesia in the poetry of Propertius.



Heyworth and Morwood define ‘synaesthesia’ as ‘a blending or confusion of different kinds of sense impression’.<sup>240</sup> Propertius opens 3.2 with a series of sensory descriptions, beginning with a striking piece of synaesthesia:

Carminis interea nostri redeamus in orbem  
gaudeat ut solito tacta puella sono. (Prop. 3.2.1-2)

Meanwhile, let us return to the cycle of my poems so that the girl may rejoice, touched by the familiar sound.

In 2.16B there is a more controversial example:

uidisti toto sonitus percurrere caelo  
fulminaque aetherea desiluisse domo. (Prop. 2.16B.49-50)

You have seen the sounds of thunder race over the whole sky and lightning bolts leap down from their heavenly home.

Propertius makes the most of the zeugma as the verb *uidisti* is placed but for *toto* next to its odd object. Heyworth has misgivings about this and amends *sonitus* to *tonitrus*, thereby avoiding in his opinion the synaesthetic expression *uidisti sonitus*, where a verb of visual perception is used for an auditory phenomenon.<sup>241</sup> I am inclined to follow Camps, who also does not split poem 16 into two separate entities, and leave *sonitus*. He notes that ‘the use of *uideo* here with reference to sounds is assisted by the visible object *fulmina* in the next line; but cf. also I, viii, 13 *uideam...uentos*’.<sup>242</sup>

Finally, Papanghelis identifies synaesthesia in 4.7. Propertius is visited by Cynthia’s ghost, who reproaches him for his abandonment of her when she was on her deathbed. She asks him whether anyone saw him bent over in grief or his black toga grow warm with tears:

denique quis nostro curuum te funere uidit?  
atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam? (Prop. 4.7.27-28)

<sup>240</sup> Heyworth and Morwood 2010: 54.

<sup>241</sup> This is not necessarily the case. *Tonitrus* has been used to denote an auditory effect elsewhere in Latin literature, for example Lucr. 6.164: *tonitrum auribus accipiamus*.

<sup>242</sup> Camps 1967: 136.

Besides, who saw you curled over my grave?

Who saw that your black toga grew warm with tears?

Papangelis calls this ‘a masterly attempt to arrest the evanescent’.<sup>243</sup> The interesting role played by *uidit*, carried over from line 27 is worthy of our attention. It is transferred to line 28 by way of zeugma, so the second question (or accusation) can be understood more clearly as ‘did anyone see your black toga grow warm with your tears?’ Papangelis argues that this is in fact not just an example of zeugma but an attempt at synaesthesia:

*uidit* will not strictly apply to 28 and yet a kind of synaesthesia transcends the formal zeugma: the eye captures the curve, absorbs the colour (*atram*) but also feels the moist (*lacrimis*) and the warm (*incaluisse*) penetrate (*incaluisse*) the fabric of the garment; the *toga* drinks the tears...<sup>244</sup>

He then adduces a further example where the deaf shore also drinks up tears: *nempe tuas lacrimas litora surda bibent* (4.11.6).<sup>245</sup>

The role of *enargeia* in these examples is an important topic. Synaesthesia by definition does not just appeal to sight, which is the primary sense in most definitions of *enargeia*. Can we apply a definition of *enargeia* such as Dionysius’ to these situations? He notes that Lysias’ skill was to make his audience see the actions which were being described and bring the characters of his story to life in front of his audience. But it is not just sight to which Dionysius refers, although it is sight that is pre-eminent in his definition. Dionysius states that *enargeia* is the conveying of things to the *senses* (ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις) of his audience. Likewise, Ps.-Demetrius uses the example of the sound of a man’s footsteps to illustrate *enargeia* produced through the description of attendant circumstances (*De Eloc.* 217). The audience imagines the sound and is therefore able to draw conclusions as to the gait and movement of the man. *Enargeia* could certainly incorporate synaesthetic description, which seems to be the sort of combination of cross-sensory appeal that would satisfy the requirements of even a primarily sight-focused definition like Dionysius’.

<sup>243</sup> Papangelis 1987: 164.

<sup>244</sup> Papangelis 1987: 164-165.

<sup>245</sup> Papangelis 1987: 165.

We can, then, locate a number of examples of synaesthesia in Propertius' *oeuvre*. These all invite complex sensory responses, and raise sense-perception in Propertius to another level. There is, I believe, much more to be discovered about Propertius' descriptions, about the role of synaesthesia and its relationship to *enargeia*, and how synaesthesia appeals to the reader.

### *The way forward*

I have set out to explore how Propertius and Tibullus encourage the reader to visualise what they describe. In doing so, I have brought the role of visualisation in their descriptions into sharper focus. For poets whose work depends so much on the evocation of emotion and intimacy of tone, it is essential that the reader be able to picture what is going on in his or her mind's eye. The role of *enargeia* in descriptions has been a prominent, recurring theme. We have found *enargeia* in several forms and across many descriptions. But it is in the appeal to sight that both our poets produce the most striking and successful examples of *enargeia*. Visual description is an essential aspect of vivid description, for without it the reader lacks an obvious angle of approach for visualisation.

The relationship between art and literature has been another important line of enquiry. As befits poets whose descriptions appeal to the reader by virtue of their visual qualities, the influence of contemporary art has been a fruitful source of comparisons. We have seen that on many occasions Propertius approaches his subjects with a painter's or sculptor's eye. Even Tibullus displays touches of artistic awareness, though admittedly not on the same scale as Propertius. I have suggested that Propertius and Tibullus had in mind when engaging in such artistically aware descriptions not merely a specific *objet d'art* but an expectation that their readers would have a fund of knowledge of *objets d'art* at the ready. *Enargeia* was therefore essential for ensuring that the reader could picture the right sort of art to fit the description, and the reference to the works of art simultaneously contributes to the effect of *enargeia*.

Particular techniques such as integration and supplementation operate in much the same way, relying on the reader first to visualise what is being described and then to situate himself within that context. Our poets' mastery of integration and

supplementation, and use of contemporary and Hellenistic visual artwork are contingent on achieving *enargeia* in their descriptions.

We have the opportunity to increase our understanding of the role of visualisation in erotic elegy much more. The third member of Goethe's *Triumvirn*, Ovid, is the next obvious step. He is already enjoying a higher profile, buoyed by studies in the *Metamorphoses* in particular, while recent commentaries like McKeown's have refreshed his elegiac output. His work is also replete with visual appeal. Much could be gained from a detailed study of *enargeia* and visualisation in Ovid, which would no doubt set in deeper relief many conclusions we have reached about Propertius' and Tibullus' *oeuvres*, as well as open up other lines of enquiry.

We can also move beyond the visual. I outlined above some passages in Propertius that are notable for their blending of sensory impressions. Propertius and Tibullus also explore other senses, especially touch, but also sound and smell.<sup>246</sup> The relationship between these senses and sight is important, and we have already seen how a descriptive passage can be enhanced through sensory appeal. *Enargeia* may also be extended to encompass descriptions that appeal to these senses.

The rehabilitation of Tibullus is another important matter, one that is still very much work in progress. Tibullus was working very much within the Alexandrian tradition, something which has in the past been denied, mainly due to the lack of any specific mention of other poets in his work. It is of utmost importance that we bear in mind Quintilian's assessment of Tibullus as *tersus atque elegans*, for this helps us to understand not only the reception of his work in antiquity but also the way in which he makes use of visual description. This thesis adduces enough evidence to rebut the assertion that Tibullus' poetry lacks visual appeal. In this area I have identified a number of significant allusions to Callimachus and Theocritus; more will no doubt exist. With Tibullus, the time is ripe for a reinvigorated reassessment of descriptive techniques in his elegies. His contribution to sensory appeal and sensual description are important to our understanding of the genre.

There are therefore many opportunities for further study in this area, which will help to increase our understanding and enhance our appreciation of Roman elegy and the place it occupies in ancient literature.

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<sup>246</sup> We have briefly considered some examples of these. We recall the touch of Cynthia's kiss that arouses Propertius at 2.15.7 (above, p. 55), the sound of the pipes drowning out speech at Tibullus 2.1.86 (above, p. 97), and fragrant Armenia, where the winds scatter Tibullus' dreams (1.5.36; above, p. 33).

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